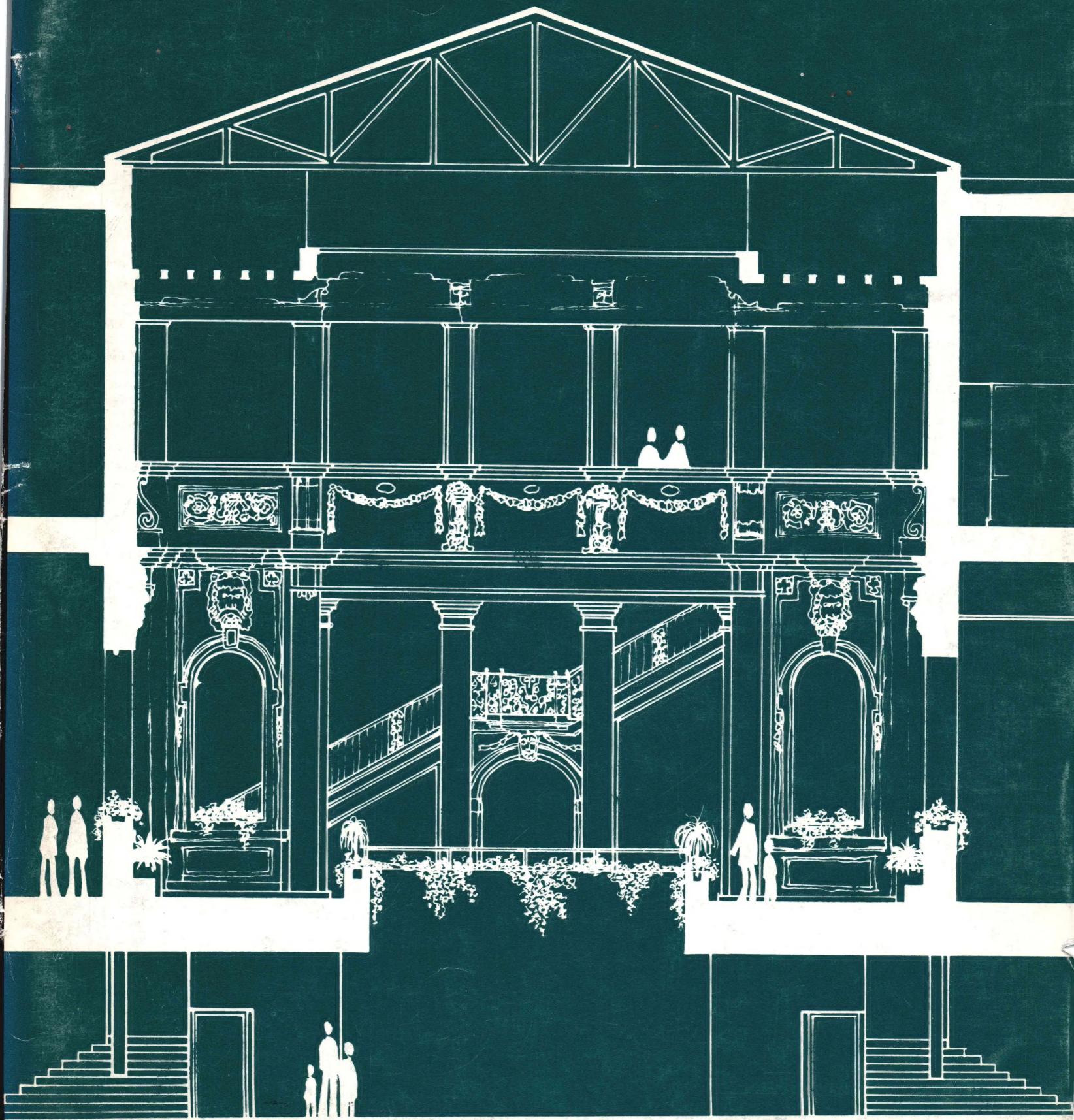


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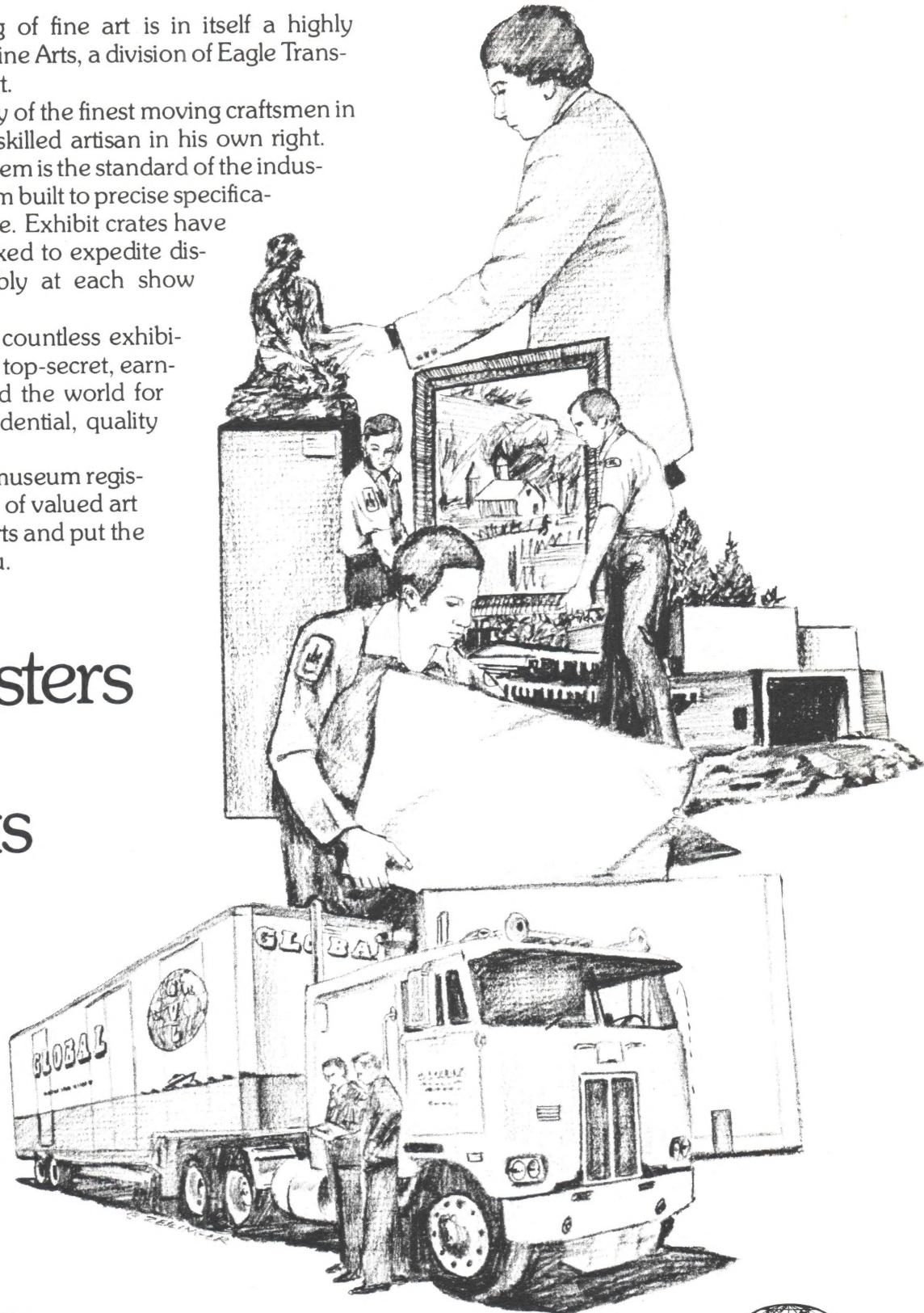
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June 1983

The Magazine of the American Association of Museums

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North-south cross-section of proposed masterplan improvements, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1975. Museum identities are reflected through the building's structure, as well as through the collection that it houses. See the feature articles on museum architecture beginning on page 32.

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

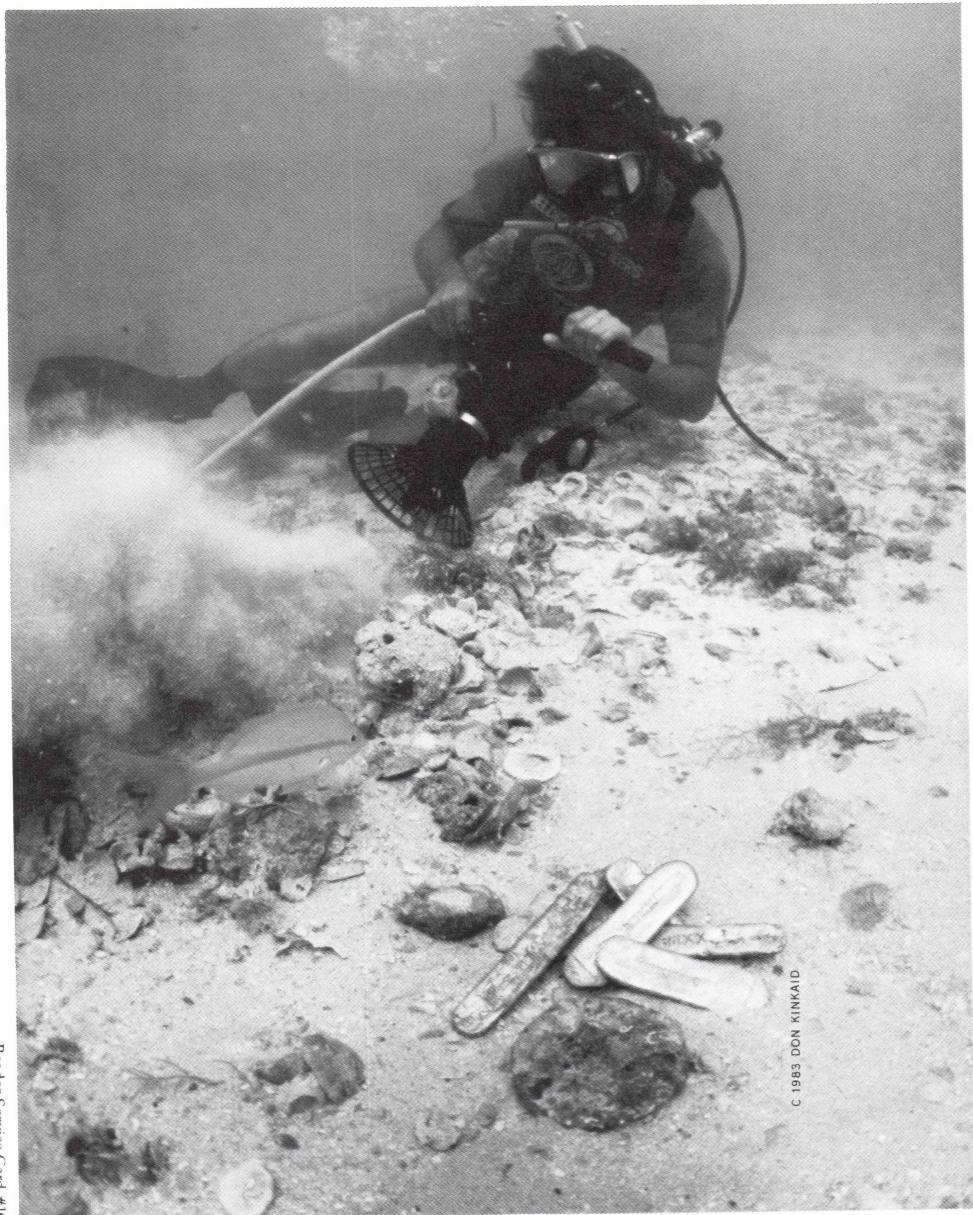
**O**n many occasions I have emphasized the need for museums, both individually and collectively, to articulate their goals and the resources they require to achieve them. Ideally such efforts should be comprehensive and take a long-range view, but there are also opportunities of a more immediate and limited nature. Just such an instance occurred recently when the National Museum Services Board promulgated revised regulations for the Institute of Museum Services (IMS). These disqualify museums with challenge grants from applying for IMS support and, beginning with fiscal 1983, limit the times a museum may receive general operating support to three out of five years. Despite many thoughtful and constructive criticisms of the new regulations from a large number of museums around the country, the National Museum Services Board, which establishes policy for the IMS, decided to let them stand. The board did change new accounting and audit requirements that posed technical difficulties for some museums.

The board's principal reason for finally adopting the challenge grant and three-out-of-five-year restrictions was the belief that they would facilitate greater equity in federal funding. Since, the board reasoned, it has been impossible to fund all qualified applicants, and since excluding challenge grant recipients (primarily art and history museums) would increase opportunities for science museums in 1983, it endorsed the new regulations. In doing so it reaffirmed policy changes that take a narrow, even pessimistic, view of the IMS's role in supporting museums.

Even more distressing is the board's failure specifically to address fiscal 1984 at a time when the institute's future finally looks to be assured. After two years of fighting the administration's efforts to eliminate the IMS altogether, we were all heartened when the president designated \$11.5 million for the institute in his fiscal 1984 budget request. This provided the board with an opportunity to urge a level of funding that would enable *all* qualified applicants to receive IMS grants. While we cannot know for sure, it is reasonable to assume that fiscal 1984 appropriations could actually reach this level. Congress has repeatedly expressed its desire that the board make recommendations on both the immediate and long-term needs of the museum community. And if funding were adequate, the need for the two restrictions on IMS grants would be obviated.

Applications to the IMS have steadily declined, from a high of 1,700 in 1979 to approximately 1,100 for fiscal 1983. Like the decline in applications to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), this has been due not to a diminution of need but to policies, procedures and administrative actions that have led a broad range of museum directors to question the fundamental commitment of these agencies to assisting museums and to conclude that their energies can best be directed toward other sources of support. At the Humanities Endowment, the AAM has been gratified to see a concern at all levels for improving opportunities for museums. The NEH has just begun to review its policies in this regard, and the outlook for museums is promising.

The National Museum Services Board has not seized similar opportunities. It is important for the museum community to continue to work with this board, to encourage it to be a leading forum for dialogue about museums and their future and a strong advocate for securing the resources they need.



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## A Recipe for Survival

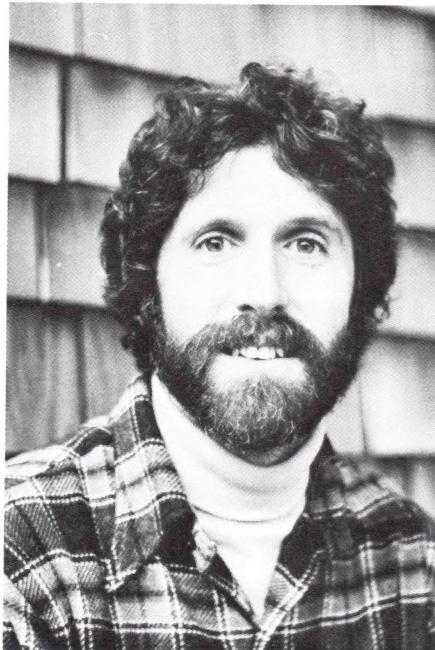
BOB FLASHER

**A**s I gaze into my crystal ball, I see two paths for the future of museums. Both rise and fall, wind to and fro in many directions and emerge and recede into the fog as they head toward two very different futures. One path seems to end in a bottomless abyss after traversing what always seemed to be safe, familiar territory. The other, passing through uncharted forests, thorny brushlands and volcanic landscapes, rises to the sunlit mountain peaks. As funding shifts from museums to missiles, many of us may have to take the second, newer road to survive.

As support from the national endowments and local arts councils begins to dry up, we are starting to look desperately for other sources of income. The focus of many museums—and the direction suggested by our nation's president—is toward developing increased financial support from wealthy individuals and corporations in our local communities. These attempts to tap traditional sources of funding for traditional exhibits and acquisitions may in the long run prove self-defeating for many museums. The reason is simple. The same group of well-to-do museum supporters that we have always depended upon as our mainstays simply cannot make up for the massive shift of federal funds away from cultural and social services.

With museums, the ballet, opera, symphonies, theater and more mun-

BOB FLASHER, currently an interpretive specialist at the Oakland Museum, Oakland, California, has been an elementary school teacher, a park ranger and a construction worker. He serves on the Board of Cultural Connections, a group of museum educators in the San Francisco Bay Area.



dane social services vying for local support, there will not be enough funding to go around. Here in California we saw this happen when Ronald Reagan, as governor, closed down most of the state mental hospitals and suggested that the local communities could take care of their own problems better and with less expense. The people released from the state hospitals are still wandering the streets of our cities and receiving little or no local care of any kind—not because of lack of concern among local communities but simply because there has never been enough money available for all the necessary social services in our society.

As some museums succeed in securing more local support from traditional donors, other museums, cultural institutions or social services will suffer for it. I believe that if museums want to survive the difficult times ahead, we must reach wider and less traditional

audiences. Since we cannot realistically expect the same group of supporters to contribute constantly increasing sums of money, we must reach a greater number of people who are willing to help shoulder the load and are eager to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Some larger museums may continue to prosper by offering "blockbuster" shows like *Picasso*, *King Tut* and *Dresden*. As long as tens of thousands of museum visitors are willing to spend an hour looking at the backs of three rows of other visitors' heads instead of looking at artifacts, these popular exhibitions may save a handful of larger museums.

In my crystal ball, however, it looks as if the only viable option for small- and medium-size museums is to offer a greater variety of less elaborate and less expensive exhibits to attract a wider variety of visitors. Many of these exhibits could be planned in cooperation with the changing populations of our inner cities. This may be the riskier road—leading in and out of those threatening forests and painful brushlands of new experiences, new experiments and new connections—but it may be the only successful alternative for smaller museums.

Many inner cities are experiencing an influx of two different populations. The biggest urban population explosion is the increase in ethnic minorities, many of whom have grown up with museums playing an insignificant or nonexistent role in their lives. In fact, for many years blacks in the South were not even allowed in some museums. The valuable art, significant historical objects and major scientific discoveries and principles that museums display so proudly have made little impact on the lives of minorities in our country. For example, many of

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## Commentary

our founding fathers, while securing freedom and voting privileges for themselves and other landowners, kept slaves on their plantations. Black Americans may not see these men as the heroes our museums often make them out to be. Some photorealist artists sell large paintings of chrome-covered semitrailers for over \$15,000—twice the annual income of the average Hispanic family, few of which can even secure a job driving one. And what good are the latest scientific inventions to the 25 million Americans who go to sleep hungry every night?

While museums alone will not be able to solve our society's most pressing problems, our survival will depend increasingly upon our willingness to confront them. The willingness to deal directly with the populations we serve should be done in the same spirit pioneered by John Cotton Dana at the

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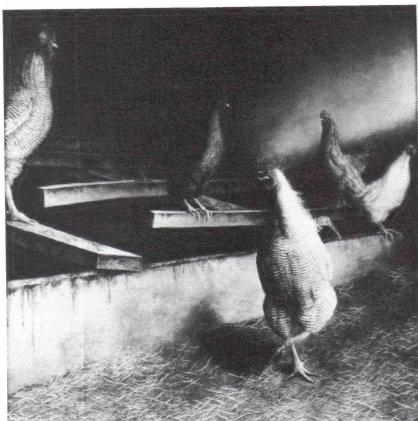
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## Commentary

Newark Museum and Henry Watson Kent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art a half century ago. This spirit of reaching out to the community and working with local people to develop relevant exhibits existed because these museums felt it was incumbent upon them to do—not because they were succumbing to community pressures as was often the case in the 1960s. We need to create more exhibitions like the Metropolitan's *Harlem on My Mind* and the Oakland Museum's *Black Pioneers: Scientists and Inventors and American Quilts: A Handmade Legacy*. In the process, we need to develop even closer ties with the communities we serve.

If we expect to create exhibits that are relevant to urban minority audiences, we will have to work closely with them. This will, without a doubt, be a two-way educational process with

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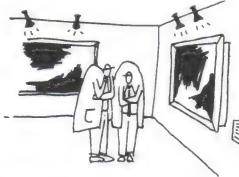
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## Commentary

its share of joys, misunderstandings, successes and problems. But if we continue to ignore the minority audiences that in some cases have already become the majority of city dwellers, we will not last much longer.

Some museums may feel that it is unrealistic to anticipate much financial support from ethnic minorities and that it would therefore be a waste of effort to provide them with more accessible and attractive programming. But studies have shown that over 60 percent of all Americans visit both zoos and science museums every year—a figure higher than the attendance at all major sports events combined. It is obvious that museums could expect an annual visit from the majority of inner city families if we could offer exhibits that were at least as attractive, educational and nonthreatening as those at the average zoo. Critics who think this would be stooping too low have only

to remember the gold-painted plastic replicas of King Tut's sarcophagus that were recently sold proudly in the gift shops of some of the finest museums in America.

The second new urban audience we may want to address is the young professionals who are moving to inner city condominiums or restoring older homes near city centers. Many of these young people, growing up in average American homes, never appreciated the arts until exposure during their college years. This audience is still in the process of learning how to enjoy and more fully appreciate museums. Exhibits with a prominent educational component would be helpful and reassuring to those who are not sure how to learn directly from objects. This educational experience must not, however, be limited to a brochure or tape recording of art history. It must also offer suggestions on various ways to perceive, evaluate and develop personal responses to artifacts.

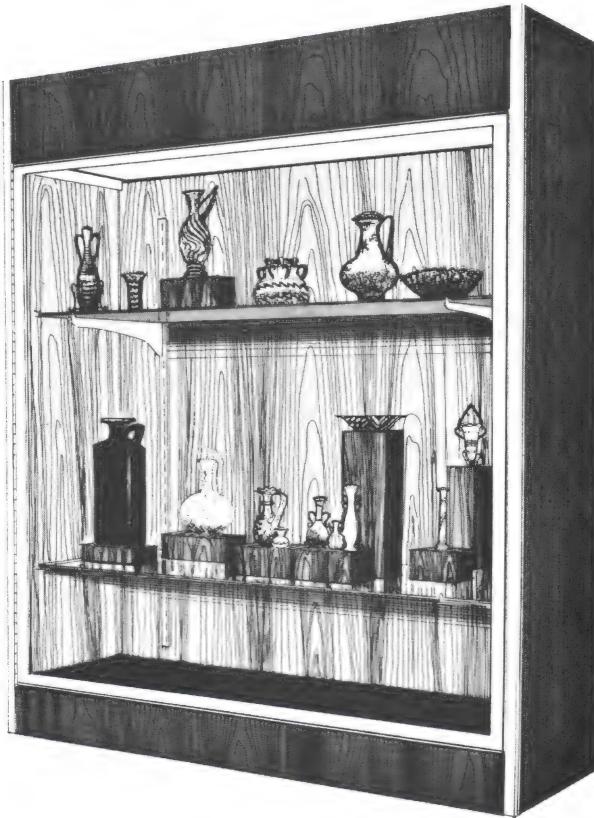
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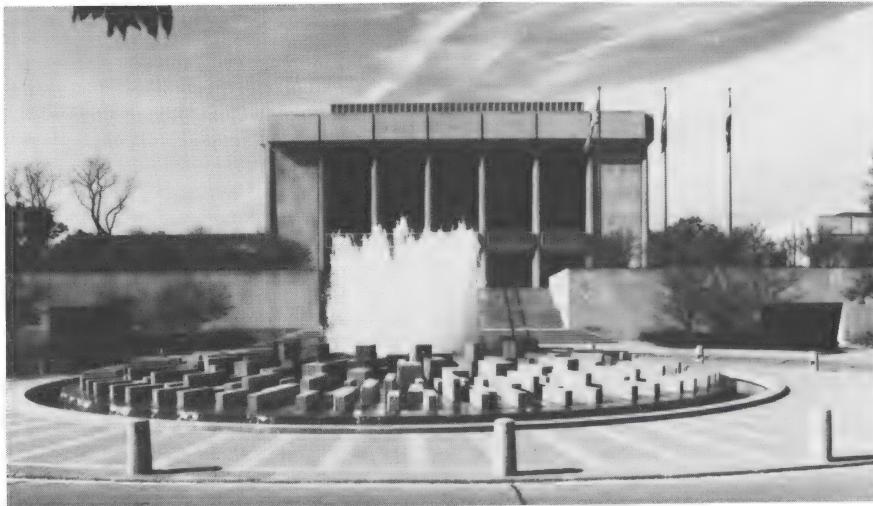


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an internationally recognized  
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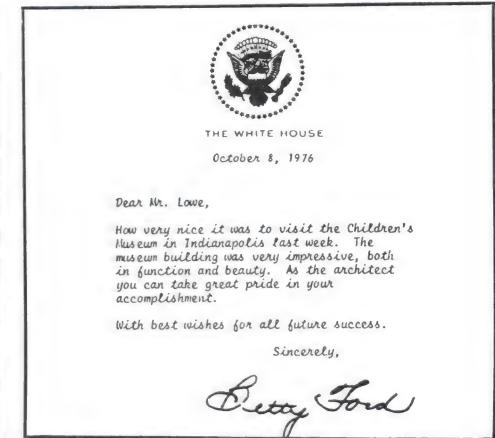
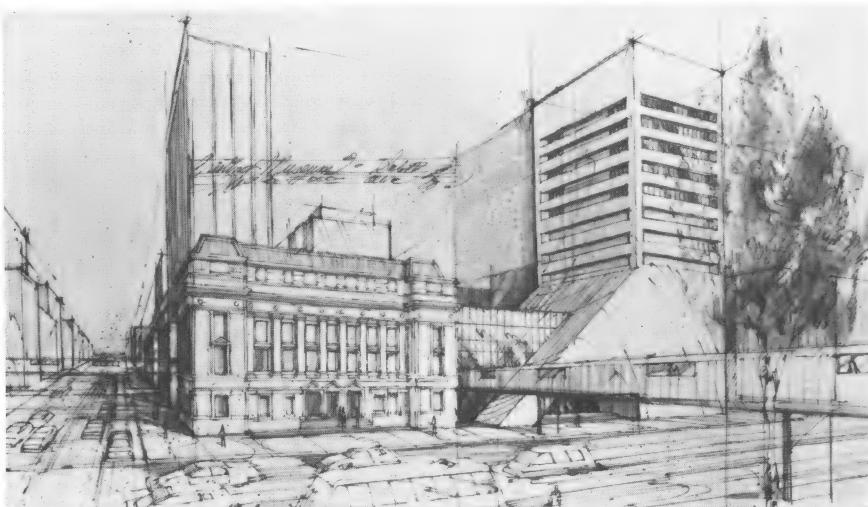
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## Commentary

continue on the straight and narrow traditional path. We may have to adjust or revise our ideas of what is worthy of exhibit in museums in order to begin a working relationship with these new audiences. At the same time, the ideas that could come out of these new co-operative ventures may very well add a new dimension to the museum experience for curators and visitors alike.

As the haze begins to clear again in the crystal ball, I can view more "living history" presentations emerging in conjunction with exhibits about our current lives in America and our lives in our countries of origin. Costume and fashion shows by high schools, recent immigrants and local designers are reflecting different historical trends in fashion, while quilting bees make good use of the scraps left over by the designers. Community artists are painting, sculpting, potting and printing in museum galleries to provide living examples of exactly how an artwork is cre-

ated. School and community dances and science and art festivals are drawing hundreds of new families into the museums. School orchestras, gospel choirs, salsa bands and bluegrass festivals are transforming museums into cultural centers for different urban ethnic groups.

History museums, taking advantage of the growing trend toward active learning, are exhibiting touchable and functioning artifacts such as apple corers, coffee grinders, spinning wheels and bellows. Meanwhile, art museums are following up school tours by bringing out pastels, clay and block-printing supplies to engage students in the artistic process. Not to be outdone, science museums are creating exhibits that instead of simply dispensing information give visitors an experience of the scientific method itself. Live animals, working microscopes, intelligent computers and experimental displays are actively involving visitors of all ages in the observations, hypotheses and discoveries of science.

These future exhibits are all beginning to teach visitors how to observe

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## Commentary

more closely and how to understand what they are seeing. Curators have realized that dispensing information is not enough for the new audiences. Exhibits are letting new audiences discover new facets of their own lives, experience new feelings and learn new ways to learn. Museums are actively working with senior, scout, church, service, business and ethnic groups to develop a greater appreciation of their own lives and culture. While some museums are still "searching for Alexander," others are helping visitors discover themselves.

As new museum visitors and curators work together, we both see more clearly who we are, how we got here and whether we want to stay. We are able to apply cooperative skills—learned while planning exhibits—to our lives in our communities. We are working together to make our neighborhoods esthetically pleasing environ-

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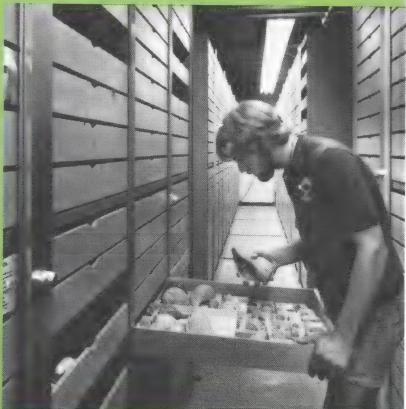
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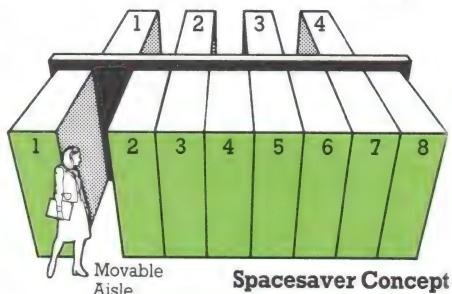


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## Commentary

ments; neighbors are helping to paint each other's houses and working together on community sculptures and murals. As we learn to appreciate our historical roots through developing exhibits on our own subcultures, we are joining together to preserve local historic sites. When we see destructive environmental practices, we are mobilizing the community to correct the situation.

Some courageous museums, emerging from long hibernations in safe little caves, will follow a new path toward controversial exhibits. Safety will be tossed to the wind as these museums tackle contemporary issues. Debates, town meetings and community action will accompany exhibits that present several strongly opposing points of view on an issue. Visitors will be challenged to choose between these opinions or come to their own conclusions. Some exhibits will actually influence the future of the community and re-

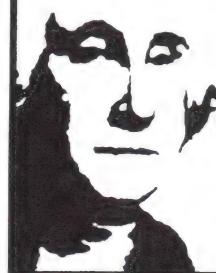
gion instead of simply reflecting the past.

Increased emphasis on active, participatory museum exhibits that complement traditional shows will develop behaviors that lead to active participation in real life after the museum visit. These exhibits will in turn empower people to work on even more involving and relevant future exhibits that we cannot even imagine now. Museums, in fact, might be instrumental in replacing the current political structure with one that values life-supporting activities rather than life-destroying technologies.

Now that we have had a glimpse of some dreams and visions of what could be, it is time to chart our individual and communal courses into the real future. Museums can become the cultural and social hubs of our changing communities, but only if we are willing to take some risks and follow uncharted paths. It is now up to all of us to remember our own visions, listen empathetically to the dreams of our neighbors and blaze some new pathways together into the future. △

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The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England, first opened its doors to the public in May 1683. It was conceived by Elias Ashmole, who ensured the survival of his collections by presenting them to his old university. The museum is now housed in a neo-Grecian building designed in 1845 by C.R. Cockerell.

A major component of Ashmole's collections were the "rarities" assembled by John Tradescant and his son of the same name, shown here with Roger Friend and some of the exotic shells that he subsequently made over to Ashmole. The portrait, ca. 1650, is probably by Emmanuel or Thomas de Critz.



# The Ashmolean's First 300 Years

SIR DAVID PIPER

**T**he Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England, has been claimed (notably by the *Guinness Book of Records*) as the "oldest museum in the world." An arguable point, but it became, when opened by the then duke of York (later King James II) in May 1683, certainly one of the first museums to open to the public, if not *the* first. Even though it has always been the private museum of the University of Oxford, it has also always opened to all comers. This year it is 300 years old.

The Ashmolean's founder was Elias Ashmole (1617-92), a courtier of Charles II but also a man of many parts. In this he was characteristic of the brilliant intellectual age in which he lived; his contemporaries included men as various as Pepys and Evelyn the diarists; great scientists like Boyle, Hooke and Newton; the greatest of British architects, Sir Christopher Wren. Most of them were, like Ashmole, founding or very early members of the Royal Society. Ashmole was, perhaps, atypical in that he also was very strongly attracted by traditions other than those of the new, rationalist and empirical science which, in Isaac Newton's case especially, was to revolutionize man's conception of nature. Ashmole was fascinated by nonrational and mysterious studies, such as astrology and alchemy, and also—a dedicated royalist all through the republican turmoil that followed on the Civil War and the execution of King Charles I in 1649—committed to traditional ceremony as part of the scaffolding of social and political stability. Heraldry, one of the roles of which was

SIR DAVID PIPER is director of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England.



the categorization of order in society, was his profession, and he was the author of the standard and immensely learned work on the history of the most prestigious British order of knighthood, the Order of the Garter.

In John Riley's portrait, Ashmole is shown holding his *History of the Order of the Garter* and decorated with gold insignia presented to him by princes and kings.

## International



Henry VIII's stirrups were given to the Tradescants from King Charles I's Wardrobe and belong to the Ashmolean today.

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Ashmole was also a collector. His own specialty was numismatics—coins and medals. By his time this was a favorite field for study and collection among British men of culture; through its coins you can spell out the history of classical antiquity, of Greece and Rome. Held in the hand, these coins are the substance of history—only the very rich could hope to import the massive pieces of monumental sculpture from the Aegean.

Ashmole's curiosity, roving and insatiable, extended to all phenomena, both natural and artificial. He was early on attracted to an astonishing collection accumulated in London by the Tradescant family—father and son, John Tradescant I, who died in 1638, and John II (1602-62). The Tradescants were by profession gardeners—great gardeners, who created the gardens for the kings of England, James I and Charles I, and for their most sophisticated and grand courtiers, exquisite settings for the great country homes that were building all over England. For their patrons, the Tradescants imported and naturalized plants and trees that were then exotics, though now they seem as if they have always been English: newcomers like the lilac that now scents the rain-rinsed spring of English suburbs, the great plane trees in which no doubt the fabled nightingales sang (and sing?) in Berkeley Square, that copious creeping houseplant so popular in England as throughout North America—Tradescantia.

The Tradescants nurtured these and many more, imported from all over, in the nursery garden by their home in Lambeth on the south bank of the Thames. But in that house they also gradually built up an astonishing collection of other rarities, objects natural or artificial. Everyone who traveled from England seems to have been importuned by the Tradescants to bring some strange souvenir back for the collection at Lambeth. The Tradescants themselves traveled—John I to Europe, even as far as Russia; his diary

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## International

of his trip in 1618 still survives. John II went more than once on the then-still-hazardous long sea voyage to America and even had a stake in land in Virginia. Their collecting appetite was omnivorous and inexhaustible. They even managed to persuade the Royal Wardrobe—King Charles I's store—to part with desirable pieces. Henry VIII's stirrups (still to be found in the Ashmolean and attesting to the width of the feet necessary to support the great bulk so vividly rendered in Holbein's portraits) were one such lot, their removal recorded in an annotation in a surviving inventory of the Wardrobe.

Ashmole visited the Tradescants at Lambeth, and was fascinated. So much so that in 1656, certainly in no small part due to his help and probably actual wording, there was published the first catalog of a museum to be printed in English: the *Musaeum Tradescanti-*

*anum; or, A Collection of Rarities, preserved... by John Tradescant.*

The younger Tradescant was much concerned about the future of the collection, especially after the death of his only son (John III) in 1652, and eventually he made it over, by deed of gift, to Ashmole, who had come to live in a house next door at Lambeth. John II died in 1662. By 1674 Ashmole had conceived the idea of ensuring the survival for posterity of his own collections, of which the Tradescant one was a major component, by presenting them to his old university, Oxford. In due course he made the offer, subject to the university's building "a fabric" to receive them. The fabric materialized in the form of a building of some grandeur, probably by the local mason Wood (though Christopher Wren may have influenced it), so expensive indeed that the university found itself unable to buy any books for the Bodleian Library for some years afterwards.

In March 1683 Ashmole's "rarities," in 26 cases, proceeded by barge from Lambeth down the Thames to Oxford, and from the banks of the Thames in

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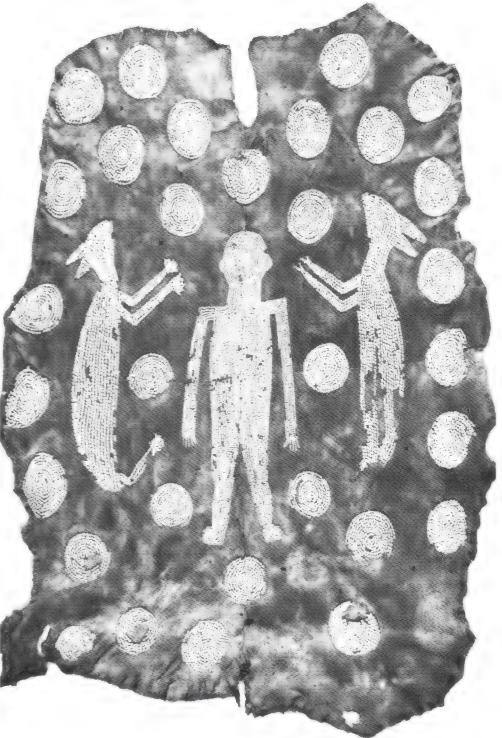
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## International



This North American Indian ceremonial cloak, of deerskin embroidered with shells, is traditionally believed to have been given by Powhatan, Pocahontas' father, to Capt. Christopher Newport in 1608.

12 carts to their new home. In May of the same year the museum was opened formally by the duke of York. On Ashmole's death in 1692, still further gifts came to it by his bequest.

Three hundred years later the Ashmolean flourishes, but in a very different form and translated into a noble neo-Grecian building of 1845 by C. R. Cockerell, the original building becoming the home of the Museum of the History of Science. The Ashmolean's progress as museum has not been entirely steady. It was conceived in the first place also as a center of serious scientific investigation, sometimes described as an "elaboratory." Through the 18th century it was to remain the center of science, practical and theoretical, in Oxford. The collections, however, did not compel such attention; early on, that part of it was referred to somewhat irreverently as the "Knick-knackatory." Much was lost, and even destroyed, especially organic materials

prone to decay. The most famous of these losses was the legendary dodo, recorded in the Tradescants' 1656 catalog as the "Dodar, from the Island Mauritius; it is not able to flie being so big." The bird was noted as having become noisome and ordered to be destroyed; there now survive only its beak and a few other fragments of its anatomy.

In the 19th century, however, interest revived, and clarification and rationalization gathered impetus. Procedures of classification can already be discerned in the 1656 catalog, which is divided into three parts—the "Natural," the "Artificials," and the trees and plants in the Lambeth garden. *Natural* meant natural history: birds, whether preserved whole or in part; "fourfooted Beasts, with some Hides, Hornes, Hoof"; fishes; shells; insects and serpents; fossils and minerals; exotic fruits; woods; even pigments for painting. The mechanical section was classified under various headings. One was "Carvings, Turnings, Sewings and Paintings"—i.e., "Artificials," but very miscellaneous, ranging from freaks like "Flea chains of silver and gold" to "two figures carved in stone by Hans Holben" (now sadly lost). There is, still more miscellaneous, a "Variety of Rarities": Indian morris bells, Roman urns, phylacteries, a "Brazen-ball to warme the Nunnes hands" and even—mysteriously—"Blood that rained in the Isle of Wight, attested by Sir Jo. Oglander." Of "Costumes and Textiles" the most spectacular survivor is "Pohatan, King of Virginia's habit all embroidered with shells, or Roanoke," a magnificent cloak from Pocahontas' father. There are also exotic costumes from all over the world and historic items like the aforementioned stirrups of Henry VIII. "Utensils" includes articles of daily use, Roman lamps, Indian cradles, Chinese lanterns, an umbrella, saddles, beads, mirrors, etc., etc. Finally, a lengthy section lists coins—Greek and Roman—and medals.

The collection the Tradescant catalog records is, of course, still in character one of those *Wunderkammer*—chambers of wonders, cabinets of curiosities—that the princes and aristocrats of Europe liked to accumulate in the Renaissance, guided by a fairly indiscriminate appetite for the exotic, for the curious, for the precious and the

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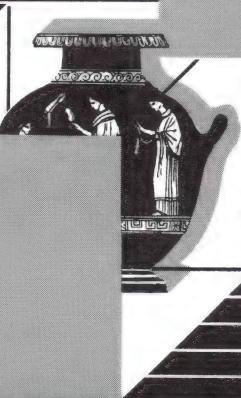
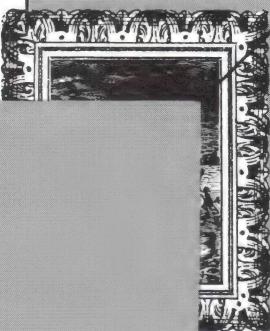
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valuable, for "showing off" to visiting potentates and to their subjects. The classification is rudimentary, but it does mark a starting point for the development of those more scientific systems that museology has since refined into such endless ramifications, now coming under necessary control of the computer.

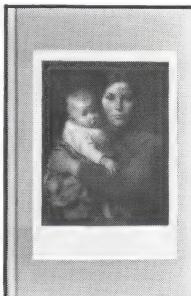
In the 19th century the Ashmolean gradually separated out into its component parts. Ashmole's own very rich collection of books and manuscripts went to the Bodleian Library. Scientific and natural history collections (including the sad relics of the dodo) were hived off to the University Museum, opened in 1860. Objects of ethnological and anthropological interest went to the now-famous Pitt Rivers Museum. And the Ashmolean itself finally consolidated in its new building into four departments: Antiquities,

Western Art, the Heberden Coin Room, Eastern Art. Though the university has always paid upkeep, and generally staff costs, the building that now houses its museum has been built mainly from donations. And no less so the collections, through a continuing sequence of extraordinary benefactions of art, coins and medals, but also in the archaeological field through the museum's continuing involvement in excavations in Italy and Greece, in Egypt and the Near East, with famous pioneers of scientific excavation techniques like Flinders Petrie. When the Keeper of the Ashmolean around 1900, Sir Arthur Evans, wanted to excavate the legendary palace of Knossos in Crete, he simply bought the freehold and set to.

The Tradescants, and Ashmole himself, would be astounded and I trust gratified if they could see the flowering that the seeds they implanted in the University of Oxford have now produced: a shrine and indeed, in the broadest sense, an "elaboratory" to which scholars and art lovers come from all over the world. Ashmole was the first in a long line: the British Mu-

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## International

seum followed in 1753, founded by a Chelsea physician, but it was another Oxford man, James Smithson, who laid the foundations of the institution in Washington, D. C., that has since grown into the largest and most all-embracing vital project of its kind in the world. △

As part of its tercentenary celebration, the Ashmolean Museum will hold a symposium July 10-15, 1983, on "The Cabinet of Curiosities." Scholars from around the world will speak on European *Wunderkammer* and on 17th-century collectors and collecting. Further information may be obtained by writing the Ashmolean Tercentenary Symposium, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH, England. In addition, Sir David Piper will preside over the fifth annual Oxford-Smithsonian seminars, September 9-24, 1983. Full information may be obtained by writing the Smithsonian National Associates Program, Washington, D. C. 20560.

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## EDITOR'S NOTES

JUNE 1983

Volume 61, Number 5

### The Staff of the American Association of Museums



Front: Munley, Betz, Kamm  
Middle: Papageorge, Davidson, Graziano,  
Constantine, Sullivan  
Back: Sjoblom, Reger, Hastings, Dispensirie



Front: McNamara, Igoe, Norman  
Back: Grove, Grogg, Hicks, Morton, Jordalen



Front: McGowan, Clune  
Back: Calvert, Fullwood



Front: Schreiber, Ostrich, Hooper, Turkelson, Wright  
Back: Hibbard, Saichek, Barone, Bower, Warren

Staff absent from photos: Kartalia, Maxwell, Robinson, Walker



# The Museum Impossible

DOUGLAS DAVIS

**L**ike war, the American museum is impossible to wage, or design. A recognition of this truth is essential to any discussion or evaluation of the museum-as-architecture. In the beginning, in Europe, the museum was a palace. When the Louvre was finally declared a national trust, its doors thrown open to the public for good in 1848 (after many fitful starts and stops since the revolution), it was understood to be a palace, no more, no less. To this day we stroll through its stately rooms and corridors without the slightest objection to its inconveniences, as a place in which to look at art. In fact, many of the grand paintings in the Louvre are actually suited to the royal pomp that surrounds them, though the mixture of the two, of postrevolutionary art and the palace, was never in the mind of the king and his architect. When the hybrid palace-cum-museum appeared, it had no purpose other than the revelation of its secrets. No one expected the Louvre at once to cavort the eye, rest the body, feed the stomach, delight the fancy (in its own small theater) and pander slick books, catalogs or elegant reproductions of its secrets. All of these intentions developed later in the United States. And when it happened, there were no models. I repeat, *no models*. We have had to invent our own failures.

Think about the extraordinary leaps that have taken place in the past 100 years or so. From the palatial Louvre and the quiet, classical Trumbull Gallery at Yale (the first American museum to survive its adolescence) to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D. C., where the *Spirit of St. Louis* hangs in perpetual flying splendor from the roof . . . to the doughnut-shaped Hirshhorn not far away . . . to the silver-faced Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, which squats on the ground like an idling triangular spaceship . . . to the dramatically sculptured Whitney Museum hulking on the podium that is Madison Avenue in New York . . . to the schizophrenic Los Angeles County Museum, which splits itself into three pseudoclassical boxes strewn across a sun-drenched plaza on Wilshire Boulevard . . . to, finally, the Shin 'en Kan Museum of Japanese scrolls on the rise in Oklahoma, endowed by the late Bruce Goff with lighter-than-air translucent walls suspended beneath tall masts.

It is a new world, in other words. I sometimes think that the very word "museum" blinds us to what has happened. Derived from the Greek, from the ancient notion of a "realm of the muses" where the arts lolled in solitary splendor inviting inspiration, the "museum" is now a hydra-headed creature with—pardon the mixed metaphor—too

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DOUGLAS DAVIS is the architecture critic for *Newsweek*, author of *Art Culture: Essays on the Post-Modern* and an artist whose work was recently exhibited at the Wadsworth Atheneum.

*Derived from the Greek, from the ancient notion of a “realm of the muses” where the arts lolled in solitary splendor inviting inspiration, the “museum” is now a hydra-headed creature with . . . too many pipers to pay.*

many pipers to pay. In his response to MUSEUM NEWS' question, Chicago architect Harry Weese complains wistfully of new museums filled with "contraptions" like escalators, elevators ("vertical coffins") and ramps (introduced by the intrepid Corbusier at Harvard's Carpenter Center). "Bookstores and cafeterias are another source of unwelcome sights, sounds and smells," he grumbles. But the "pantheons, palaces, cathedrals and castle keeps," ah, these are "removed from the clamor of the street," he says—which is exactly where and how any museum that pretends to offer repose and contemplation should be. *Removed*.

But . . . but . . . who desires this saintly end? If the American Museum once sought removal—and that's debatable—it no longer does. In fact, our Louvre tries to seduce and gratify as many publics as it can. Whether this fact is bitter or sweet depends on the esthetic and social orientation of the taster (again, pardon the metaphor). César Graña once wrote a landmark essay on this difference, which he linked to geographical sites. "The Boston position," he wrote, "is patrician and classicist. It believes that works of art should be allowed the full, undisturbed majesty of their meaning . . . and that, therefore, every man must work his own salvation at the feet of beauty." Why Graña believes that this aristocratic viewpoint belonged only in Boston isn't made clear. But the New York position! Ah, that is infinitely more in the American grain. To wit: "It is democratic and uplifting. It holds that museums should aid—perhaps seduce—the visitor into a proper understanding of what he is looking at. It believes that art should be ordered, labelled, and interpreted, thus . . . facilitating cultural digestion for the greatest number."<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the New York position, however errant the label, has lately triumphed. And certainly this discomforts those who believe the muses' sacred realm should remain sacrosanct, and hushed, including the architects themselves. I remember complimenting a famous designer on his new museum a few years ago. He snorted in reply that it was "a civic center, not a museum." Further: "They wanted me to give them all sorts of things—rooms for concerts, for dancers, an auditorium. That's a community looking for a place to take pride in." But this is exactly the point, my elegant friend. In the late 20th century, the museum itself has a public meaning. In virtually every American community, it is a symbol of aspiration. Complaints about the Death of God aside, the museum now stands for all that the cathedral used to represent. It is no accident that appropriation bills for the two endowments regularly sail through Congress with barely a murmur of dissent, even when the president wants them cut. For the time being, High Culture is God-like, as long as it is also Democratic (small "d").

This is precisely why the Late Modern/Miesian-inspired Space will not do. A blunter way of describing this concept is the Museum-as-Loft syndrome, which artists and artist-inspired trustees have often proclaimed as an ideal in the last two decades. Rightly alienated by the huge sums spent during those decades to rear elephantine monuments—paring funds for staff, exhibitions or collections to the skinniest of bones—they have asked for what is in effect an empty barn in which a perfectly neutral, unadorned space can be transformed by the artworks

*In the late 20th century, the museum itself has a public meaning. In virtually every American community, it is a symbol of aspiration. . . . The museum now stands for all that the cathedral used to represent.*

brought there. Most recently, this debate flared hotly in the last stages of the design for the new Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. On one side were the post-Bostonians, pleading for a series of clean, white walls, no more, where art could repose and the audience could contemplate. On the other side were the post-New Yorkers (led by the architect from Tokyo, Arata Isozaki), who asked instead for an inviting red sandstone facade, complete with an entrance site covered by a gently arching panel vault and a staircase winding down through a sunken patio. Let us tempt and beckon the public by this means, said Isozaki and his cohorts. But the opposition responded—fearing that Ornament might prejudice spatial purity—with an idea first properly defined years before by Mies van der Rohe. The ideal museum would be “one large area, allowing complete flexibility,” he said. “Architectural space in such a museum becomes . . . defining rather than confining.” Further, quoth the Master, the paintings in such a space would “become the planes that define the non-hierarchical space.”<sup>2</sup>

But alas, there is no such infinitely flexible and malleable space. Witness Mies’ own National Gallery in West Berlin: a gaunt glass box resting on a solid gray pedestal. It is the horror of any curator or artist who has tried to act within it. Inside, a network of apparently disposable walls is normally erected to defuse the omnipresent neutrality of the box. It is an impotent attempt to endow the interior with identity, so that art can be seen at all, rather than overwhelmed by purity. On Ada Louise Huxtable’s recent visit to Berlin, she complained that the exhibition in the National Gallery could not stand up to the magnificent symmetry of the building—and blamed the organizers for that failing. But the failure is Mies’. Why? No painting, no scientific artifact, no manuscript can act or live in isolation. It is perfectly obvious that every work of man’s making is fabricated in a specific temporal and geographical context: that is, in response to the world or to ideas in the world. The Mona Lisa is far more moving and beautiful on the wall of a palace, or a burgher’s living room, than in a neutral white space because, inside that antiseptic purity, she can have no human meaning. She can act there only as a form, wrenched from the context in which she was born (that is, the human world).

This is precisely why Mies’ neutral space fails again and again as a public arena for art, as does the supposedly barren SoHo warehouse-loft (which is never barren, in point of fact; normally it is filled with sofas, chairs, crockery and spattered paint cans). This is also why the most specific and pointed spaces excel as theaters for art: the vertiginous Guggenheim, the hulking Whitney or the tawdry P.S. 1 in Long Island City. Though we’re told that the Guggenheim’s spiraling ramp destroys the sheer pleasures of seeing, remember the extraordinary success that greeted the Joseph Beuys show in that space? The clash between those asymmetrical piles of felt and fat and the perfectly rounded spiral set off sparks. Remember, too, Jasper Johns’ delicate, gray-toned paintings at the Whitney, so gently and firmly contradicting the rough-hewn texture of the museum’s walls? When we wander through P.S. 1 we are continually reminded not only that it was a school, once—but also of our

*The American Museum  
is a celebrative icon, a  
totem. This does not, it  
should not, dictate  
monumentality. . . .*

own student days, hiding in the corner of this room (now decked with blazing Schnabels), to escape the teacher's eye. But we focus upon the Beuys, the Johns, the Schnabels with more intensity than we would in a calm and unobstructed space. The effort required for seeing in these spaces heightens the intensity inherent in the work. Here we see art as a part of the real world, where it is always made.

I'm not arguing that we can't design spaces that are hospitable rather than forbidding for exhibitions of every variety—from paintings to vintage airplanes to Zen pots. Of course we can on one level—on the most practical level of need, use and function. The architect can provide galleries, halls, storerooms, even elevators and ramps (despite Harry Weese's objections). But on another level—the one that concerns us here—he has a completely impossible and contradictory job. Think about how variegated his task has become, on the functional level alone. In the last major exhibition devoted to the state-of-the-art in museum architecture (Whitney Museum, summer 1982) it was impossible to find a single reclusive space. From the High Museum in Atlanta to the Portland Art Museum in Maine to Dartmouth's Hood Museum, the diversity of spaces and functions was profound. Each institution combined galleries, theaters, at least one shop and often more. The closest in plan and tone to the old ideal was Edward Larrabee Barnes' grayer-than-gray Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, which "sports" an immense but unadorned limestone facade. Listen to Barnes himself as he talks about the incredible variety of galleries he must provide:

It is the galleries of the permanent collection that set the tone of the whole museum. They are arranged on three levels, each with its own character. First there are the contemporary galleries—a cruciform space embracing four box-like rooms. . . . The next level contains the collection of European and American art, a serene space with daylighted outer wall, Miesian screens and a central patio with wisteria vines and a quiet pool. The third level contains objects in cases. . . . The exit from the third level leads back to the spine by way of a grand cascade of stair.<sup>3</sup>

No, the revolutionaries who demanded that the Louvre be thrown open never dreamt of anything like this. Today the very dreamers who object to the bastardization of the museum ideal can see the proliferation of museums like Barnes' everywhere, but they can't grasp its meaning. The democratic transformation in the last 100 years has been so complete that we still don't act or think on the basis of its implications. In an era when universal education and instant communication thrive, the arts, the sciences and the crafts are all intimately intertwined with a public larger than any imagined in the past. At last count, the visits paid to American museums of every kind numbered more than 300 million—more than the number of citizens, in fact.

It is exactly this condition that requires the architect to create something beyond that Miesian cipher, in the interest of art as well as its public. The American Museum is a celebrative icon, a totem. This does not, it should not, dictate monumentality. But it does demand that a visual statement be made, that the building *mean* as well as be or simply

*It does demand that a visual statement be made, that the building mean as well as be or simply provide shelter.*

provide shelter. Even the notorious Centre Pompidou—the Frenchman's fantasy of American ingenuity—has become a symbol, thanks to its context. Though the architects (Piano and Rogers) tried to design a simple machine for exhibitions, Pompidou is now a token of populist cultural democracy in a society where the museum traditionally maintained a palatial air. It is somewhere between Pompidou and the Louvre that we must find our place, between the Boston and New York positions. I can think of only one structure that successfully mediates within that gap. Of course this ideal is impossible, but I remind you that I said that it was impossible at the beginning—impossible to design a building that can satisfy the public at large, the intense specialists who run it and the requirements of historical context. No other country continues to try as often as we to manage this solar mission.

But there is that lonely example, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth. The Kimbell's galleries are scaled to the men and women who look at art. So is the interior, which is a graceful series of cycloid vaults, with intimate chairs and sofas spread around. The light within is all-pervasive and entirely natural, transmitted by open shafts from the vaults above. And I conclude with the words of Louis Kahn, the Kimbell's architect, in a brief treatise on light. You will notice that he nowhere recommends blankness or neutrality or the steady, unremitting clarity of the artificial light that has whitewashed so many of our museums in recent decades. No, he recommends a light that is as diversified, as shifting, as impossible as the phenomenon I have been trying to describe:

The first thing that inspired an interest for me when I received the commission to do the Fort Worth museum was to dispel the fear of natural light. This gave rise to the shapes of the Kimbell, the search for a way to allow for natural light. Artificial light has only one mood. It must be natural light. Then, each painting will appear differently each time it is seen. When the day is dull, you can feel it inside the building. Different seasons will create different lighting effects. Sometimes a painting will say, "Don't look at me today. You can't see me. Wait for a day when the light works with me, then look." And the paintings were done in a natural light, so they should be seen that way. Then, we understand that they were *born* out of light. And we were born out of light too, you know. The room becomes your room when it's lit by your light. The rapport that is established between you and the poetry—whether that poetry is sculpture or painting—can only be right if the light is the same light that both you and the poetry have generated.<sup>4</sup> △

#### NOTES

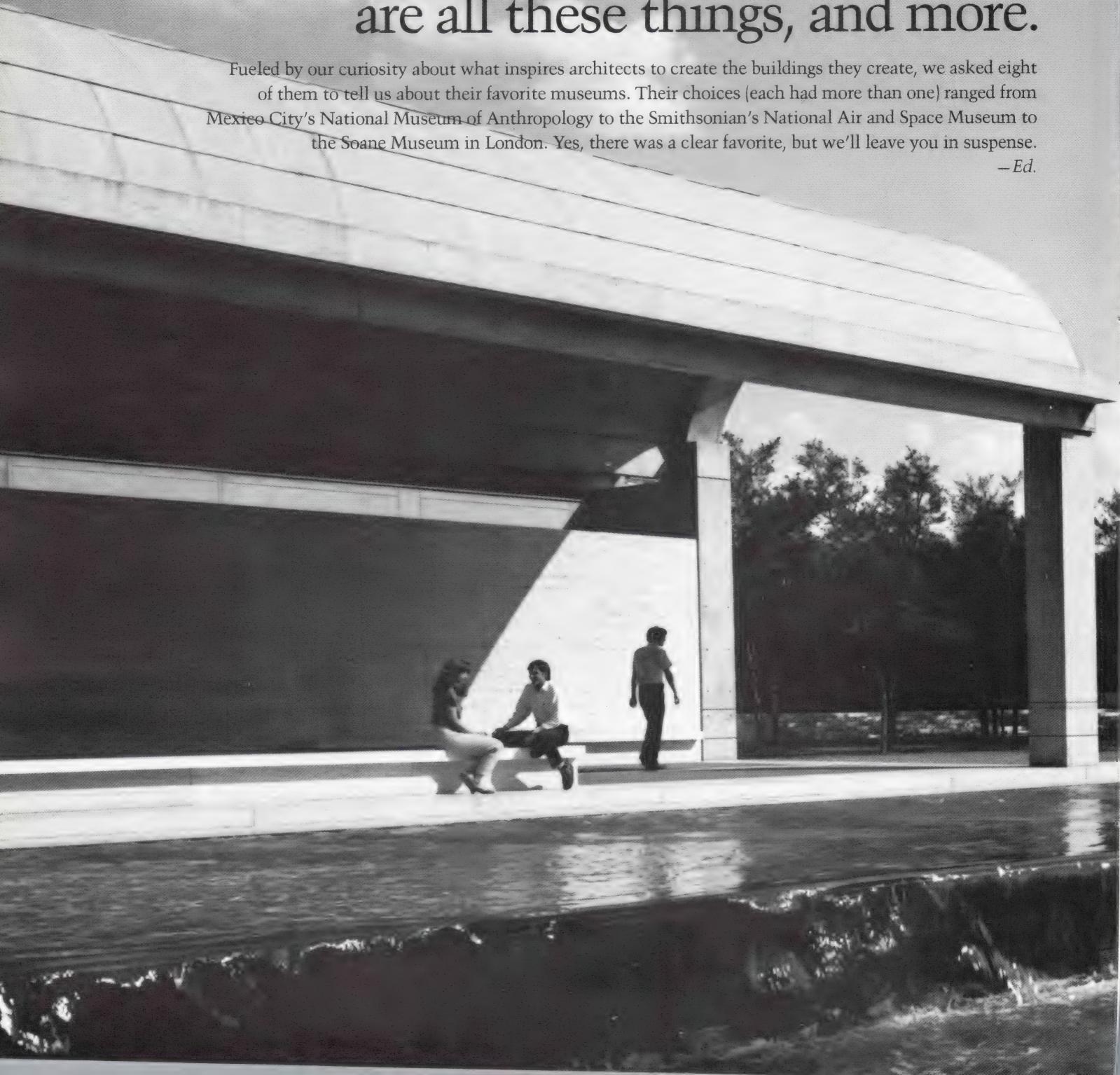
1. César Grana, "The Private Lives of Public Museums," *Trans-Action* 47, no. 5 (April 1967): 20-25.
2. Helen Searing, *New American Art Museums* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982), 51-52.
3. *Ibid.*, 88.
4. Unpublished interview, 1973.

# The Largest Object in the Museum's Collection

A visual respite. Noble and welcoming. To architects, museum buildings are all these things, and more.

Fueled by our curiosity about what inspires architects to create the buildings they create, we asked eight of them to tell us about their favorite museums. Their choices (each had more than one) ranged from Mexico City's National Museum of Anthropology to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum to the Soane Museum in London. Yes, there was a clear favorite, but we'll leave you in suspense.

—Ed.



Museums in the hierarchy of public buildings rate very high; more than most they attempt, through architecture, to manifest people's belief in the specialness of their existence. They do so by trying to reflect the highest state of the art of architecture. Many try too hard and fail, but some reach lofty levels of achievement.

I cannot name one museum that, in my judgment, surfaces above all others. I can, however, narrow it to three—the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

The Kimbell Museum is elegant, strong in form, sited well and has a strong "sense of place." A variety of materials mesh well together; the strongest single contribution, in my mind, is the mixture and control of both natural and artificial light. How daylight, diffused through screened skylights, is mixed with artificial ambience and special exhibit lighting is uniquely successful.

The Whitney Museum affects its neighborhood positively. It is an urban building, respectful, yet special on the street. The scale of the building and its parts, the sculptural quality of its form and again the marriage of diverse materials make it exceptional.

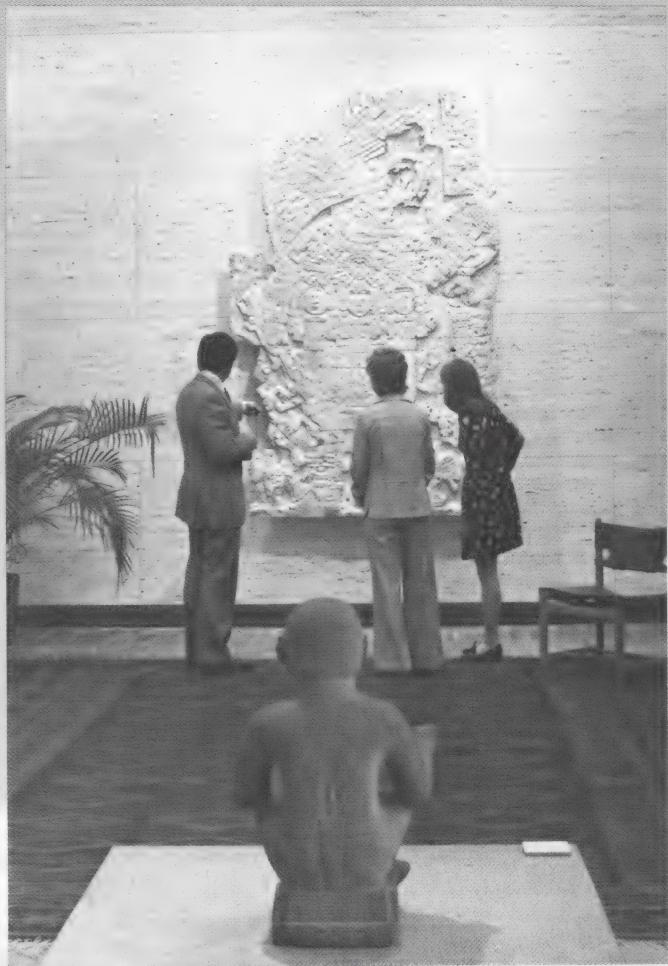
The Walker Art Center, besides simplicity and strength of form and mass, has great functional capabilities, great flexibility within. I have viewed all types and sizes of exhibits at the Walker, and all seemed to be equally appropriate to the museum.



BRUCE A. ABRAHAMSON

Hammel Green and Abrahamson, Inc.

Minneapolis, Minnesota



Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas  
Louis I. Kahn, 1972



Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Edward Larrabee Barnes, 1971

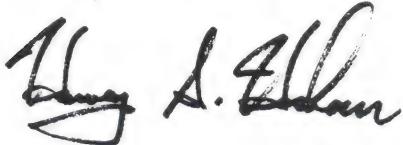




**A**ssuming the question is concerned more with architecture than it is with formidable collections or inventive programs, I would have to select two buildings as my favorite museums—the Galleria di Palazzo Bianco in Genoa, Italy, and the New National Gallery in West Berlin.

Franco Albini, in remodeling Palazzo Bianco, displayed both exquisite taste and absolute restraint in creating a most elegant setting for the collection. Albini has done what few architects are willing to do: suppress his own ego in deference to the art. A second feature that makes Palazzo Bianco so successful as a museum is its direct circulation pattern around a central court. As with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City and the Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, no energy is expended on wondering "where to go next," and the large central space provides a pleasant visual respite from the concentration demanded by all great art.

The National Gallery in Berlin stands out as one of the great museums of our time because, again, the architect, Mies van der Rohe, was willing to provide an extremely elegant container that in no way competes with the art it contains. The quality of space that Mies created in the National Gallery does indeed provide a noble setting for its contents. Mies' famous dictum, "less is more," should most certainly be practiced by any architect designing museums.

The signature of Harvey S. Hoshour, written in a flowing, cursive script.

HARVEY S. HOSHOUR  
Hoshour and Pearson/Architects  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



New National Gallery, West Berlin  
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1963



Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas Louis I. Kahn, 1972





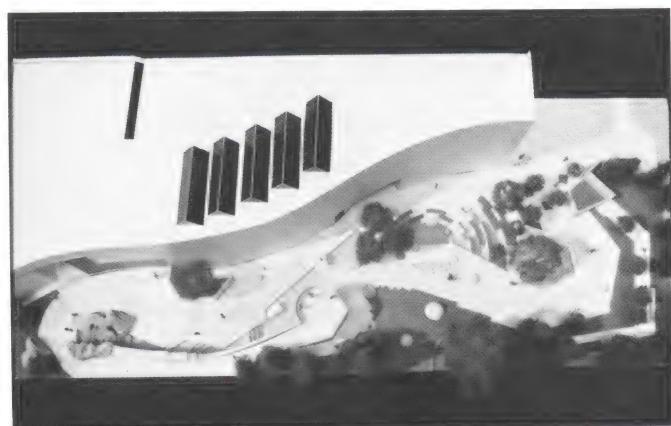
Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina  
Clark Tribble Harris and Li, 1967

Museums are taking dramatically different forms. Once monumental and distinct, they remain the symbolic centers of art, history and culture, but are now addressing a new set of criteria. New museums are more contextually responsive. They are assembling the eclectic, the unique and the commonplace of our culture. Hence the great range of types and styles in the current museum building trend.

Our firm has had the opportunity to design two completely different types of museums in a short period of time. Their programs differ dramatically—one is a "hands-on" urban museum of science and technology, the other a suburban fine arts museum.

Discovery Place, Charlotte, North Carolina, is a very urban building. As shops once put their best face forward on main street, so too, this building is a storefront revealing the exhibitory and activity beyond the glass. The gently curving facade borders an outdoor water park created to simulate the layering of geological strata from mountain to sea.

The Mint Museum of Art, also in Charlotte, is a regional art museum consisting of the original Mint Building with a 1950s-style addition. The new program called for reorienting the main entrance away from the existing facade to a public park at the rear. The new design will wrap around the existing wing embracing the original building. The new addition will be of a similar character and scale to the original Mint Building and feature a gabled glass entry repeating the profile of the original Mint and park in the form of a "winter garden" and provide a place for



Discovery Place, Charlotte, North Carolina  
Clark Tribble Harris and Li, 1982

sculpture and greenery. This glass foyer reveals the walls of the original addition decorated in a trompe l'oeil manner.

Although these buildings are very different, they share a similar approach to design—their programs and settings are used as a source of their contextual response and design imagery.

*Gerald Li*

GERALD LI  
Clark Tribble Harris and Li Architects  
Charlotte, North Carolina



National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C. Gyo Obata, Hellmuth, Obata and Kasselbaum, Inc., 1976



Uffizi, Florence, Italy Giorgio Vasari, 1574



Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona, Italy  
14th-century castle renovated by C. Scarpa, 1961

The museums that I most enjoy are the Gardner Museum, Boston; the Kimbell Museum; Louisiana Art Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark; the Soane Museum, London; the Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C.; and three Italian museums, Castelvecchio Museum in Verona, the Etruscan Museum in Rome and the Uffizi Museum in Florence.

All are remarkable and house great collections—strong objects displayed in buildings that show the collection to advantage. They also respond to hierarchies of scale, modulate the flow of people to and from the objects and recognize differing levels of viewing privacy.

Museums can be active places like the Air and Space Museum, but my favorite type of museum offers a delight of place, a variety of light and interplay between space and light—a quiet, contemplative kind of delight in which to reflect. Most of the above museums have large spaces that are primarily for people movement, mixing and viewing, as well as spaces for viewing where two people are a crowd.

One of the exciting challenges for coming generations of museum spaces is the reintegration of natural light into exhibition and public spaces—screening the deleterious effects of natural light yet allowing the light to remain strong; technical advances make this possible. In this regard, the addition to the Stuttgart Museum by James Stirling and the Renzo Piano's DeMenil Museum in Houston—one almost built, the other still being planned—are eagerly awaited.

  
JAMES McDONALD  
Hellmuth, Obata and Kasselbaum, Inc.  
St. Louis, Missouri





Louisiana Nature Center, Inc., New Orleans, Louisiana E. Eean McNaughton and Associates, 1980

My first premise is that a visit be a "memorable event." Experiencing architecture must be an integral part of the cultural message communicated by the museum. My second premise is that the museum building is the largest object in the museum's collection. The same attention should be given to the creation of the building that is given to developing a fine art collection or an interpretive science center. To ask what is my favorite museum building is like asking what is my favorite wine. I have many favorites.

I have a deep admiration for Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum—for the sophisticated understatement of exterior form, inspired use of natural light in interior spaces, powerful serenity of vaulted spaces, simplicity of plan, exquisite details, superbly planned and detailed museum shop and, finally, the flexible partition wall panels and exhibit lighting integrated into the design. The beautiful entrance sequence makes a sensitive transition from exterior space, associated with water, through a tree canopy into the lobby. Kahn achieved a delicate balance between the drama of the interior space and the art exhibited.

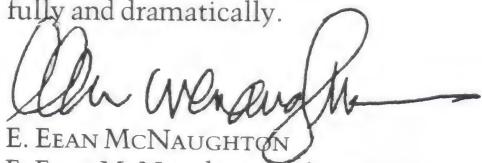
Arthur Erickson's Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, British Columbia, is an exciting architectural form apparently inspired, in part, by the Northwest Coast Indians. Object size was a factor in the design since the collection consists of large totems as well as numerous small pieces. The main interior exhibit space expands from the entrance with the display of small objects to the large totems viewed in the same relationship to the sea as was the customary Indian plan. The building is sited with a beautiful cliffside view overlooking the Strait of St. George. The architecture "works" on many levels—for the casual visitor interested in the drama of the site and a cursory

awareness of the Northwest Coast Indians or for the serious student and scholar. The entire collection is accessible, beautifully displayed in handsome "visible storage" cabinets or available in drawers.

The New England Aquarium, Boston, and the National Aquarium in Baltimore are favorites because of the integration of structure and exhibitory, particularly the bold exterior of the National Aquarium. The Seattle Aquarium's ingenious domed tank puts the visitor "in the tank," and the fish outside viewing the visitor. The Ontario Science Centre, Toronto, is an architectural understatement with marvelous circulation through open and closed spaces and down the sloped site. The building complements the content.

My Louisiana Nature Center, New Orleans, succeeds because the architecture contributes to the "event" of the visit and the purpose of the institution. The building "speaks" about Louisiana with an empathy for interaction between the natural and manmade environment.

The rotunda, corridors and courtyards of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., set the mood for a profound experience. The new East Building provides a luminous Piranesi-like spacial experience that is an appropriate complement to the quiet but powerful size and character of the National Gallery. The recent Rodin show in the East Building confirms that the building can present major exhibits successfully and dramatically.



E. Eean McNaughton  
E. Eean McNaughton and Associates  
New Orleans, Louisiana



New England Aquarium, Boston, Massachusetts Cambridge Seven Associates, 1969



National Aquarium in Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland Cambridge Seven Associates, 1981

JUNE 1983



I find it very difficult to identify a single favorite museum. High on my list are the Uffizi in Florence and the Louvre in Paris, perhaps because of their collections more than their architecture. Kahn's Kimbell and Pei's addition to the National Gallery (East Building) are magnificent works, perhaps more for their architecture than for their collections. Wright's Guggenheim is spectacular, but I have trouble getting my mind on the collection.

My favorite probably would be the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City. Here the collection is magnificent, and the architecture sets it off with great sensitivity. The National Museum is organized around a large courtyard that constantly orients the visitor. Around the central space are small exhibition halls, which function as small museums within themselves, dedicated to major geographical areas of Mexico. Beyond the exhibition halls are gardens for the display of large objects, such as an extraordinary megalithic sculpture of a La Venta head. The intense sun of Mexico discloses sculptural features faithful to their original conceptions. The National Museum conveys the feeling that it could expand outward as additions are made to the collections in the future.

Each hall is appropriately scaled for its collection and seems to be important; nothing ends up in a corner or a place of lesser importance. The collections are well arranged and lighted; explanations are easily located and read. To get an overview of the entire museum, one may stroll through the main hall around the courtyard, observing each hall in turn. The scholar may go directly to the area of his interest without crossing through any other area. Days can be passed studying each exhibit in detail.

The sound of a great waterfall from a large cantilevered sunshade dominates the paved courtyard. The National Museum accommodates throngs of schoolchildren as easily as solitary scholars. The site is a



National Museum of Anthropology and History, Mexico City, Mexico

Pedro Ramirez Vazquez, 1964

beautiful park near the center of Mexico City. The building's main entry is noble and welcoming, imparting a sense of what the visitor will experience inside. The National Museum conveys some insight into the magnificent spirit of pre-Columbian Mexico. This it does by being nothing more, and nothing less, than it is. In the synthesis of space, scale, light, sequence and contents lies its greatness.

WILLIAM MORGAN  
William Morgan Architects  
Jacksonville, Florida



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,  
New York, New York  
Frank Lloyd Wright, 1959





National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
West Building: John Russell Pope, 1941  
East Building: I. M. Pei and Partners, 1978





Soane Museum, London, England Sir John Soane, 1812-13

The idiosyncratic nature of Sir John Soane's Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, imparts a delightfully memorable character not often found in contemporary museums. Soane, an 18th-century architect, was a serious collector of drawings, paintings, sculpture and various assorted fragments of ancient architecture. Familiar with the Italian "grand tour" and an avid museum-goer while in Rome, he imitated the current Italian museological technique of grouping sculptures and other artifacts with an eye for their beauty of effect as well as didactic organization. The result was specific groupings of objects that required specific settings and controlled vantage points. Therefore, Soane developed symbiotic dialogue between the museum as the container of the artifacts and artifacts themselves. One is inseparable from the other.

His displays are ingeniously arranged in an intimate series of spaces with unexpected views from room to room, level to level and viewer to work of art.

Lighted by beautiful stained-glass skylights, the objects are often reflected in carefully placed mirrors. A continually unraveling series of surprises is found in the Hogarth Room. Wall upon wall of Hogarth paintings are placed in hinged frames, and beyond those lies another room displaying sculpture.

The Soane Museum is a personal statement of joy, surprise and delight that relates most comfortably to the viewer. In contrast, many contemporary museums require a sense of order, a lack of flexibility. Their exhibits can appear cold, controlled, anonymous. Unlike the friendly, unpredictable atmosphere of the Soane, contemporary museums seem impersonal and, at worst, alienating.

RONALD A. STUP  
Keyes Condon Florance Architects  
Washington, D. C.



Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York   Marcel Breuer with Hamilton Smith, 1966



What should a museum be? An art form in and of itself, or a background for art? It seems, depending on the ego of the practitioner, that the museum as an architectural statement is the trend. A museum commission is very hard to come by, and there is a social register of museum architects. It appears that the city which wants its Picasso would also like a blockbuster museum, but it is harder to trade buildings than paintings. The board of the Whitney put a chink in the monopoly of museum specialists by appointing a refugee from academe, new to the field and on his first assignment, to design the Whitney's MOMA-like annex. Keep your fingers crossed; the event gives hope to other aspirants for these glamorous plums.

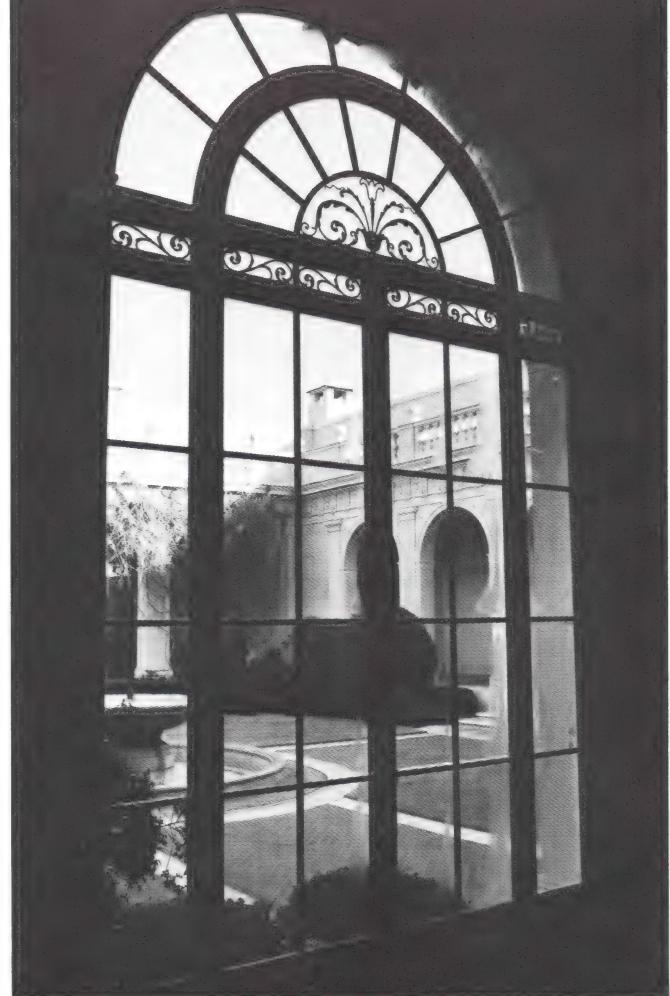
My favorite museums in this country have to be two of Louis Kahn's—the Kimbell and the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut. Kahn is a master of controlled natural light, as he is of natural materials. He combines it all in an elegant understatement redolent of quality. He seems to agree that the chards of civilization are more comfortable in a Treasury of Atreus than in a Beaubourg. In the container dominating the contents category, Centre Beaubourg, Paris, is probably the most flagrant—taking art to the factory in an engineered high-tech decor.

The people love it, it is said, and it does give a good view of Paris from its outdoor escalators. But would an intelligent audience tolerate an opera or a concert with so much background noise, false notes, miscues and blurred edges? It seems to me quite irrelevant to the viewing experience.

Architecture once built has to be more or less accepted, absorbed or ignored. These sometimes accidentally found objects don't go away. There is no way to tune out their weighty presence. We live in the age of the common man, who is young and uncommonly appreciative of what is new. A new and different proletariat is lining up at the box office. Attendance means better matching, and queues are a thing of beauty to the museum director. Another impact is now suburbia, and we have to face pop architecture. Glass menageries are the stuff of suburban malls and merely increase the cost of energy and maintenance and endanger a museum's collections. Take the Denndur disaster at the Met, a tiny temple crouching in a glass blimp hangar. Pei's East Building also suffers from the picture window syndrome. Unlike other buildings on the Mall, the East Building exposes its office facade to the Capitol.

Witness the elaborate shuttering of the Met's central beehive that negates the light but not the heat. Glass makes glare and shadows, brightness is no measure of visibility. My favorite museum on the Mall is the Freer Gallery of Art, that rusticated strong box. Classical and beaux-arts buildings brought elegant sequence of spaces and movement into the everyday experience. The Whitney, despite its cavernous elevator, lacks a third-dimensional movement—an elegant progression. In the Walker Art Center a pinwheel of easy flights connects a sequence of galleries in a most agreeable progression, adding to the virtual volume by uniting all levels in one spatial complex culminating on the roof. But the cramped lobby at the ground level belies the experience to come. The New England Aquarium likewise has no narthex. Navigating the third dimension in space is fascinating. As Corbusier said, "One only appreciates space by light." In the Parliament Building at Chandigarh, India, his prefuction space benefits from an incredibly low level of illumination with a black painted ceiling off natural gray concrete columns.

In the flatter world of elevators and hung ceilings, stairs have all but disappeared behind the exit sign, the office building syndrome. Michelangelo had his Laurentian Library stairway. Corbusier brought ramps into play in his museum solutions at Ahmedabad, India, and Harvard's Carpenter Center. The world of stairs and ramps will have a second coming, and with it an escape from contraptions such as escalators or elevators—vertical coffins that, if necessary, should be unseen. Bookstores and cafeterias are an

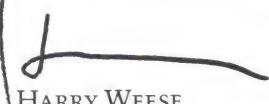


Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
Charles A. Platt, 1923

other source of unwelcome sights, sounds and smells. Whitney has it, so does the Denver Art Museum, which, along with the Indianapolis Museum of Art, are the most like office buildings.

Pantheons, palaces, cathedrals, castle keeps and chateaux are removed from the clamor of the street. Mosques are places of refuge. The museum is a modern phenomenon. But if a museum is to be a place for repose and contemplation, it had better resemble the historic repositories of art that have been handed down to us.

Other antimuseum symptoms are lock-step exhibitory, hardening of galleries with permanent installations that you'll never want to see more than once and installations that treat the viewer as a homogenized 12-year-old, where you have to read all about it before you see it. That was the Chinese exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C. The great museums of the future will be, I hope, more like live stages in the medieval marketplace. △

   
HARRY WEESE  
Harry Weese Associates  
Chicago, Illinois

DETAIL  
E

7  
A-4

TYP. SECTION  
PILLOWCASE

6  
A-4

SECTION @ PIN  
FULL SCALE

2x2 WD. 16" O.C.

BOTTOM OF CONC. JOIST

COHT. 2x2 FOR WINDOW  
TRACK ATTACHMENT. SECURE  
@ TOP, BOTTOM & INTERM. POINTS

2x4 WD. PRAMMING NO  
KED'D FOR CEIL'G SUPPORT  
NOT TO INTERFERE W/  
GLIDING DISPLAY WINDOWS

DOWNGLIGHT  
CENTERED

12" x 1½" OAK BATTENS

3/4" ACCOUSTIC CEILING  
FABRIC

¾" x 9'2" OAK TRIM

CONT. LIGHT'G TRACK  
FOR LIGHTOLIER MINI  
CANVAS FIXTURES

3  
A-4

LEANING SHELF

OAK TRIM  
MITERED CORNER  
& BATTEN

CARPET ON ¾" FLOOR

TYPICAL  
PANEL

FOOT REST

DOOR  
OPENING

2'-5'2"

7"

5'-8"

# What Architects Need to Know, and Don't Want to Hear

JOHN D. HILBERRY

**A**rchitects designing museum buildings need to have a detailed base of information upon which to do their work. This information must be related to and grow out of the basic vision of what the museum, as an institution, is to become. If this vision is not clear, the architecture cannot succeed. In planning a new museum building, an expansion or a renovation, and before talking to architects, the museum board and administration must address some basic questions:

**W**hat are the museum's broad goals and objectives?

**W**hat are the present strengths of the collection and the directions in which it should grow?

**W**ho should the audience be?

**W**hat kinds of programs should be provided?

**W**hat levels of financial commitment can be made to the project for capital funds, endowment and operating expenses?

Only if these questions can be answered with clear vision and commitment is the museum ready to talk to architects.

There is a big difference between what architects *want* to know and what they *need* to know as they set out to design a museum. Every architect *wants* to hear that he has been asked to give free rein to his creative talents by designing a building with few functional problems, a generous budget and a collection of art or artifacts to decorate his creation. On the other hand, what the architects *need* to know is that they are confronted with a design problem as complex as a hospital, that the budget will be quickly consumed by difficult technical requirements and that

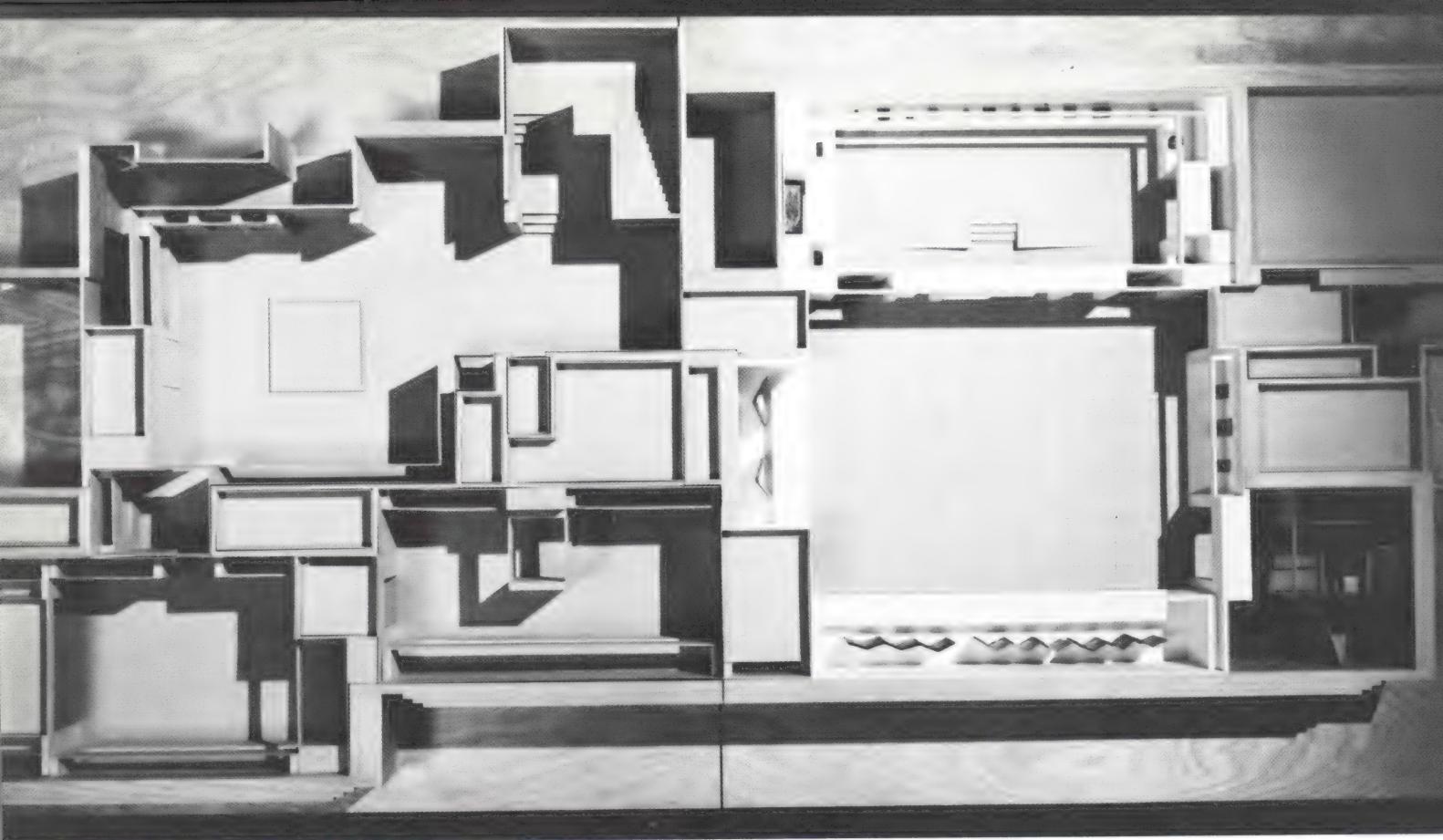
while the building must indeed achieve the highest level of design excellence and stand as a fine example of public architecture, it must be designed through a long and ambiguous process involving people who represent divergent and sometimes conflicting points of view and cannot always clearly define the program for the building.

Let us assume that the architects *want* to know all they *need* to know to design and engineer the new building properly—who is going to tell them? Architects think of themselves as problem solvers, and they see their client's job as defining the problem. But a museum staff is seldom able to do that. A museum contemplating a building program seeks to accommodate expanded activities. The building planned today may not be fully occupied for 10 years. Most of the museum professionals who will use it are probably not now on the staff to help plan it. No matter how capable or intelligent the director and current staff, they usually are not in a position to articulate future needs in the detail the architects require. Consequently, museum architects are typically confronted with designing a building for a client that does not yet exist.

Furthermore, not only must a clear understanding of the museum's future needs be established at the beginning, but it must be maintained through the entire process of architectural design, mechanical, electrical, lighting and electronic engineering, the preparation of detailed drawings and specifications for construction, modifications to accommodate budget constraints and finally construction itself. The coordination between architectural design and the engineering of mechanical systems is particularly important and generally involves people who were not in on initial discussions. If the special requirements of the museum are not understood by all members of the architectural and engineering design team and ultimately impressed on the contractors and tradesmen during the actual work, important considerations will be overlooked.

One thing every architect wants and needs to know at the outset is whether the fees will be adequate for

JOHN D. HILBERRY is president of John Hilberry & Associates, Inc., an architectural firm in Detroit, Michigan. He is an adjunct professor in Wayne State University's Interior Architecture program.



him to execute his work in a professional manner, or if he will have to minimize his hours to complete the project on a reasonable financial basis. The museum board and administration should understand that architects and engineers, like all professionals, have nothing to sell but time; if they want their architects to accept a minimum fee they should, in turn, accept a minimum of service. It is likely that the minimums will be unworkable, however, as museum buildings are complex and require careful and time-consuming attention at every phase.

The architects and client together must develop a specific program that defines the basic criteria for every space in the museum. This should be done before the actual design process begins, although modifications will surely be made later. The first step is to discuss the way in which the building is to operate; that, in turn, requires a clear projection of the way the institution will operate. The next step is to list all the spaces that will be required. Every storage area, mechanical equipment room and janitor's closet should be included. Optional spaces may ultimately be eliminated, but listing them in the beginning will serve as a reminder of functions that must be accommodated even if not given a separate room. Once the spaces are listed, the size for each must be projected, and then its special needs. These may include climate

control and security, furniture and equipment and other requirements such as lighting, acoustical or communication systems.

Developing this detailed program will be easier if at least one member of the team has experience in projecting the special requirements of museums. Perhaps the director or a key person on the staff has been through other museum building projects. A programming consultant may be called in, or an architect who specializes in the design of museums. Many museums are, of course, designed without the benefit of established expertise, and no doubt some are successful. More often, however, the hit-and-miss process that is inevitable when everyone on the team is a first-timer results in a facility with serious operational flaws that are expensive to correct or must be lived with by future generations of the museum staff.

To provide a basis for orderly thinking about a museum building program, the following outline has been prepared. It lists the kinds of facilities generally found in larger museums and additional factors that should be considered, together with the issues surrounding each. It is hoped that this list will assist the museum director and staff to prepare a draft of the spaces and special requirements for the new construction. Then they will be ready to tell their architects what the architects need to know.

# A Checklist for Museum Building Programs

## Program Space Requirements

### PUBLIC SERVICES

This area is most likely to distinguish the building architecturally. It also unites the experience of the building exterior and site with the experience of the galleries and other interior functions.

#### GENERAL

The entrance and general orientation spaces usually include a museum store; other facilities, like an auditorium or meeting rooms, will depend on the museum's program. The arrangement of these spaces should permit maximum use while preserving the security of the collection in galleries and staff areas.

#### EDUCATIONAL

Museums with active educational programs may have lecture and studio classrooms, seminar and meeting rooms and support facilities. If school groups will arrive by bus, space must be provided for group orientation and for handling coats, boots and bag lunches.

#### FOOD SERVICE

Public demand for food service is likely to grow if the museum is a beautiful and successful place. The arrangement should permit expansion without disrupting other museum functions. Functional access relationships among the public entrance and service entrances for museum objects and food service facilities (both deliveries and trash removal) may be hard to resolve.

### PUBLIC GALLERIES

#### ART GALLERIES

*General Permanent Galleries.* These are the classic picture galleries that form the core of traditional art museums. A certain amount of flexibility is desirable, but the goal is an exquisitely appropriate architectural setting for the kind of art being exhibited. A rich variety of possibilities exists for floor, walls, ceiling treatments and lighting, both natural and artificial, and for exhibition furniture such as pedestals, vitrines, cases, platforms and public seating.

*Graphic Arts, Photography Galleries.* Prints, drawings and photographs are small in scale, framed behind glass and very sensitive to light and fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Galleries should be intimate in scale with low light levels (no sunlight) and fabric-covered or easily painted walls.

*Textile Galleries.* Textiles are also sensitive to light and fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Since they are themselves fabric, they are best exhibited against a painted surface. Lighting and climate must be carefully controlled. For large textiles, ceiling heights must be generous.

*Decorative Arts Galleries.* As this category includes everything from jewelry to furniture to horse-drawn carriages, a variety of spaces, settings, pedestals, vitrines and cases may be required.

*Large Sculpture and Architectural Elements.* These require large open spaces and often a minimum of lighting and climate control (some can be exhibited outdoors), but the problems of dramatic exhibition can be difficult.

#### INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS

These emphasize the social, historical or scientific importance of the object rather than its esthetic value. Each space must be appropriate to the exhibition content in scale, architectural treatment, lighting, acoustics and climate control. The installation itself often constitutes the primary visual environment, and the task of the architects may be simply to provide a flexible neutral shell. In other instances the architectural enclosure will be very exacting, with built-in exhibition casework, platforms, pedestals, vitrines and other accommodations.

*Dark Rides.* In some interpretive exhibits the visitor walks or is conveyed through a theatrical sequence. "Dark rides" are highly specialized, and the architecture generally consists of a raw enclosure within which the exhibit is constructed.

#### INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

These are distinguished primarily by their educational content and emphasis on the visitor's experience in manipulating devices rather than observing museum objects. The task of the architects will vary greatly as with interpretive exhibits.

#### TEMPORARY EXHIBITION GALLERIES

Architectural enclosures for temporary exhibitions depend on the museum's design philosophy and resources. Some construct new interior environments—walls, ceilings, lighting and floor coverings—for each exhibition. Others have permanent floors, walls and ceilings; a few movable panels accommodate varying exhibition requirements. Between these extremes are many temporary exhibition galleries equipped with flexible modular floor and ceiling systems and movable floor-to-ceiling wall panels that can be rearranged to form new spaces. The museum staff must determine the level of new construction desired for each temporary exhibition and advise the architects accordingly.

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND CURATORIAL STAFF SERVICES

The biggest problem presented by the design of the offices is predicting the size of staff required to operate the projected institution. Operating costs will be on everyone's mind, and staffing needs are often underestimated. The

goal is to project facilities into which the institution can grow.

#### OFFICES

The amounts and kinds of work space required for each projected staff member must be described, as well as areas for volunteers, files and general work space.

#### SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

Space must be allocated for telephone equipment, photocopier, office supplies, mail room and other general staff functions, including a lunchroom or lounge.

#### LIBRARY

Location of the library depends on whether it is intended primarily as a staff or public function. The number of volumes must be carefully projected; it will probably grow even if the staff does not. There should be space for reading and reference, office and work areas for receiving and processing books, and storage for photographs, slides, films and video tapes.

#### COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

These functions are most often inadequately planned for by museum staff and misunderstood by architects. The interrelationship among departments is crucial for security and efficiency.

#### SHIPPING AND RECEIVING

This facility is especially important if an active temporary exhibition program is anticipated. Access for semitrailers is essential. The degree of protection for loading and unloading will vary with museum size and prevailing weather. Facilities for crating, uncrating, exhibition staging and temporary storage for incoming and outgoing objects will be needed, and security considerations are critical.

#### REGISTRATION

Space will be needed for files, examination of objects, preparation of condition reports, temporary storage and possibly for a computer. The registration department is usually located near shipping and receiving functions, but sometimes with other staff offices.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO

Objects may be photographed regularly for registration, condition reports, insurance, conservation and publication. Facilities may include a studio, darkroom, storage for equipment and supplies, storage for objects being photographed and for slides, negatives and prints.

#### CONSERVATION LABORATORY

Museum policy will determine the extent of in-house conservation services. At the least, a clean, separate space must be provided to store and examine objects and carry out simple conservation procedures. A complete labora-

tory may include work areas for various types of objects and special equipment such as fume hoods and fumigation chambers and storage for flammable and noxious chemicals. A separate photographic studio and darkroom may be involved. Office functions may include a reception area, reference library and files for photographs and archival material.

#### SECURITY SERVICES

These spaces must relate to overall plans for guard staffing, staff and police procedures, electronic alarm systems including location of the monitor, shipping and receiving and registration. Guards will need lockers and changing areas, and larger museums may require guard lounges and training areas.

#### COLLECTION STORAGE

Estimating the amount of each kind of storage requires careful inventorying of the collection and its current space requirements, then projecting expansion. Money spent on raw open building area that can be developed into storage is an excellent use of construction dollars. Careful consideration must be given to ceiling height, movement routes, construction and finish materials, mechanical equipment and climate control, lighting, doors, security and fire prevention, detection and suppression. As most general practice architects and engineers will not be familiar with specialized requirements and equipment, consultation may be necessary.

#### CLOSED STORAGE

These are the traditional object storerooms or vaults arranged for staff use only. They may be subdivided according to curatorial responsibility and climate control requirements.

#### OPEN STORAGE

If storage of some three-dimensional objects is to be open to the public, glass cases must be installed to permit visibility while ensuring security.

#### STUDY ROOM

To minimize the need to work on the collection in the storerooms, an adjacent room for examination and research may be appropriate.

#### Oversize Storage

A small amount of oversize storage may reduce the ceiling height and access requirements for the rest of the storage area.

#### SECURITY VAULT

Special security provisions may be appropriate for objects that are particularly valuable or vulnerable, such as gems, gold and jewelry, and for important records.

#### INVENTORY CONTROL

Room arrangement in collection storage should facilitate monitoring access, and larger museums may require a separate office for personnel responsible for the movement of museum objects and key control.

#### GENERAL STORAGE

Museum operations involve large amounts of storage unrelated to the collection. These utilitarian rooms, with few special requirements, should be separate from collection storage.

#### EXHIBITION FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

The legitimate storage requirements for pedestals, vitrines, cases, stanchions and exhibition panels and furniture are generally much larger than anticipated.

#### PUBLICATIONS

An active publications program will require extensive, secure storage for catalogs, posters, annual reports and other materials.

#### MUSEUM STORE AND RENTAL GALLERY

Retail functions involve inventory storage that may be as large as the museum store itself.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Here will be stored the folding tables and chairs, costumes and all the paraphernalia needed for periodic social functions.

#### AUDIOVISUAL EQUIPMENT

A relatively small but secure space with good shelving, lighting and perhaps a small work area may be required.

#### LIGHT FIXTURES AND BULBS

Lighting is a surprisingly big function in an active museum; plenty of shelving in a convenient location should be provided.

#### GROUNDS AND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

Lawn mowers, wheelbarrows, carts, tractors, snow blowers and other vehicles should have their own storage area.

#### SHOPS

Exhibits preparation and maintenance shops may be combined. Work space for museum objects (see Conservation Laboratory) should be separate.

#### EXHIBITS PREPARATION

Carpentry will be required for the installation of temporary exhibitions. In some museums exhibits preparation may involve the fabrication of interpretive or interactive exhibits and special techniques such as taxidermy. Requirements will vary according to how much work will be done in-house and how much by outside contractors.

#### MAINTENANCE AND BUILDING TRADES

A large museum will need separate areas for maintenance supply storage and for carpentry, electrical work, sheet metal work, masonry, plumbing, electronics, locksmithing and caring for indoor trees and plants.

## Special Planning Requirements

#### SITE DEVELOPMENT

##### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

Many museums have an architecturally prominent, monumental front entrance, while most people enter by a side or back entrance more convenient to the parking lot. This strikes at the heart of the esthetics of the visitor's museum experience. Addressing this dilemma should be a prime charge to the architects. Areas for unloading and parking buses may require special attention.

##### DELIVERIES

Most daily deliveries will be by small vehicles, but some museums will need access for semitrailers.

##### LANDSCAPING

The museum experience often begins before the visitor reaches the building, and certainly the grounds are important to the museum's relation to the community. Plants, fountains, a sculpture garden or outdoor interactive exhibits may be appropriate.

#### MOVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC WITHIN THE MUSEUM

Control of public access at the entrance is critical. Coat and parcel checking, information desk, telephones, guard's station, museum store, lecture hall, classrooms and meeting rooms, toilets, drinking fountains and sometimes food services must be accessible to visitors without their going through galleries.

##### CIRCULATION

Museums built in several stages are often architecturally and spatially incoherent and confusing. The visitor disorientation and discomfort run counter to the museum's esthetic and intellectual purpose. Architectural improvement programs should address this problem as a primary objective.

##### HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY

Access for the handicapped is a serious problem in many existing museum buildings, but one with which most architects are familiar.

## **SECURITY**

Museum functions must not put the collection in jeopardy or require expensive security staffing. It should be possible to close off the galleries from public areas during meetings, performances or social functions and to close off permanent galleries during openings of temporary exhibitions.

## **SEPARATION OF PUBLIC AND STAFF AREAS**

Public and staff functions generally operate on different schedules. Public access to staff areas must be limited and controlled, as museum objects in these areas are extremely vulnerable.

## **MOVEMENT OF OBJECTS**

Architectural accommodations for the safe and efficient movement of objects are particularly important in museums with active temporary exhibition schedules.

## **SHIPPING AND RECEIVING FUNCTIONS**

These include loading dock and freight elevator and spaces for crating and uncrating, staging, registration, conserva-

tion, photography, collection storage and temporary exhibition galleries. The architects must understand and accommodate the interrelationships of these functions—the operating efficiency of the museum and security of the collection are at stake.

## **AVOIDING BOTTLENECKS**

The openness of routes along which objects will travel must be ensured from planning through completion of construction. Consideration should begin with truck access, size and configuration of loading dock and size of door and elevator openings. The architects must monitor the work of mechanical engineers and construction contractors to prevent overhead constrictions from ducts and pipes.

## **SEPARATION OF FUNCTIONS**

Public areas should be separated from staff areas and museum object receiving and processing separated from delivery and distribution of construction supplies and from food services and trash removal.

# **Technical Requirements**

## **SECURITY**

Protecting the collection against theft and vandalism involves not only proper staff procedures, alarm systems and police support, but also the basic architecture of the building. Security is a primary planning and design consideration, not a detail to be relegated to locks and protective devices. Security systems basically serve to inform the museum staff that something has been stolen or damaged; it is better to eliminate temptation through security-conscious planning and design.

## **BUILDING PLAN ARRANGEMENT**

The design and location of public and service entrances, security stations, corridors, fire exits and windows and the interrelation of spaces are fundamental to good security.

## **CONSTRUCTION METHODS**

Many common construction methods are surprisingly easy for an experienced and uninhibited burglar to penetrate. Architects and engineers must be cautioned against using these methods in areas requiring special security.

## **GALLERY ACCESS**

Galleries should be designed so that they can be closed, secured and alarmed during public events elsewhere in the museum.

## **GALLERY CONFIGURATION**

Sight lines should facilitate guard surveillance. Where they are obscured, objects should be protected by cases and vitrines.

## **PROTECTIVE DEVICES**

The relative value and vulnerability of individual objects, the cost of protective devices and the conflicting demands of protection versus exhibition must be considered.

## **LOCKS**

A hardware consultant should design locking and keying systems to accommodate staffing and building usage patterns.

## **ELECTRONIC SECURITY ALARM SYSTEMS**

Alarm systems must be designed to suit security and other staff procedures, public usage patterns and staff and police response capabilities. They do not reduce the need for good building planning and design and proper staff procedures.

## **FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Fire is potentially more devastating to most collections than is theft or vandalism. Here, too, prevention depends on building design and construction as well as staff procedures, alarm systems, and staff and fire department response capabilities.

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

New buildings and improvements to existing buildings should be of fireproof construction. Containment of fire will depend on the building's design, construction and air-handling systems. Paints and flammable materials should be properly contained.

#### **EMERGENCY EXITS**

Exits are key factors in public safety, but their location should minimize potential use as escape routes for burglars. Close cooperation will be needed among the architects, the museum's chief of security, the hardware consultant and the fire marshal. Code variances may be required.

#### **ELECTRONIC FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS**

Design of these systems is technically complex and may be handled either by the designers of the electronic security alarm systems or by other consultants.

#### **EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS**

Selection and design of extinguishing systems require a balanced concern for life safety, for damage to the building and to the collection—from fire, heat and smoke as well as water damage from sprinkling systems themselves.

### **CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CONTROL**

Photochemical degradation occurs in objects exposed to improper atmospheric and light conditions. The architects and engineers must understand the importance of technical requirements to minimize this process.

#### **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

Provision of proper temperature, humidity and air cleanliness for the museum collection starts with basic building design and construction; it cannot be delegated to mechanical engineers. Requirements for control of atmospheric conditions far exceed those for most public buildings and will affect the building's basic plan, climate control zoning and design of insulation and vapor barriers in wall and roof construction, especially in cold climates.

#### **TEMPERATURE**

Museum temperatures are generally controlled for human comfort and for the storage of certain objects. Fluctuations must be avoided in areas where conservation standards are being maintained, primarily because of the effect on relative humidity.

#### **HUMIDITY**

Maintaining humidity levels throughout the museum in accordance with conservation standards appropriate for different objects is one of the most difficult technical problems facing the museum and its architects and engineers. The assistance of conservators is required. Defining humidity standards that meet conservation requirements and are at the same time technically and financially realistic may be difficult, requiring close coordination among the architectural engineering design process, the exhibition and collections management policy and the financial capability of the museum.

#### **AIR CLEANLINESS**

Conservators should assess the extent of atmospheric pollution and work closely with architects and engineers

to provide for proper filtration and air circulation systems. A simple system that works reliably is often better than a sophisticated one that may be costly or complicated to maintain.

#### **ZONING AND MICROCLIMATES**

It is not necessary and often impossible to maintain conservation climate control standards for all parts of the museum, but areas containing the collection must be controlled. Use of microclimate exhibition or storage cases for especially sensitive objects may reduce the need for precise control throughout the collections areas.

### **LIGHTING**

Standard engineering design practices for lighting will not be adequate. The need to see the objects and the need to protect them must be balanced. This is a complex issue involving light intensities, types of light sources, duration of exposure, ultraviolet filtration and the relation between infrared radiation and maintenance of constant temperature and humidity conditions. Careful coordination is required among curators, exhibit designers, conservators, architects and electrical engineers.

#### **EXHIBITION EFFECTIVENESS**

The need for dramatic effect and visual discrimination make this a job for an experienced gallery designer.

#### **WINDOWS AND SKYLIGHTS**

Recent technical advances in ultraviolet filtration and absorption through reflectance and a concern for energy conservation have rekindled interest in natural lighting.

### **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Most building owners, architects and engineers are energy conscious. Museum buildings designed for conservation standards will probably be energy efficient, but the mechanical systems required to maintain these standards may not be. Design of the systems to achieve both operating economy and proper control may be difficult, and initial costs high.

#### **PIPES AND EQUIPMENT**

Pipes that may leak and equipment that may drip should not threaten collection storerooms, work areas or galleries.

#### **CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS**

These may be deleterious to museum objects: cement is alkaline, certain woods are acidic and many synthetic products contain harmful chemicals. All materials to be used in the vicinity of objects should first be approved by a conservator. In many cases this will mean that the contractor will have to submit samples for approval during construction in a way that departs dramatically from standard practice, a situation which will require careful monitoring by the general contractor and architect in charge.



The Museum of Modern Art sold its air rights to a developer, who is building an apartment tower on top of the museum's new wing.

# Museums on the Move

## Creative Alternatives in Real Estate

CATHY CURTIS

In real estate lore the three most important principles are location, location and location. It is certainly true that a museum's choice of location will bear on virtually all of the issues surrounding the development of a new facility. Capital fund raising is intimately linked to the selection of a specific site. Tax issues and budgetary decisions will vary according to the way property is acquired. The site chosen will have major implications for operational costs and the museum's ability to exhibit its holdings.

But these days another principle is equally important for museums on the move: the partnership of private and public resources. In the past, cultural organizations have pretty much relied on their own resources in combination with standard grant monies. Today, with limitations on federal funding, increasing construction costs and new tax legislation, a number of real estate options have become possible for savvy museums and cultural groups. Obtaining public property, sale/leaseback arrangements and joint-use agreements (sharing an office building or locating in a shopping center) are some of the new tricks up the sleeves of museums that are learning to approach real estate acquisition in more creative ways.

The various real estate alternatives discussed below should be considered a range of possibilities, a palette from which a museum can select the situation that best fits its needs. In every case, it is extremely important that the museum do its research and consider the long-range impact not only on its own operations but on the entire town or city structure of which it is a part. The new partnerships among private interests and between private and public groups can come about only when each participant has a clear understanding of the entire picture, of the full system of mutual benefits that allows a museum to look beyond traditional sources of support in the crucial issue of real estate.

CATHY CURTIS is editor and publicist at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, California. She is the author, with the architecture and urban design firm Citywest, of *Building for the Arts: Planning, Design and Implementation* (forthcoming), from which this article is adapted. It was written with the assistance of a grant from the Design Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

### Donated Private Property

A private individual may donate appreciated property worth up to 30 percent of his or her annual income, tax free, under current tax laws. The ceiling for corporations was raised to 10 percent in 1982. In certain tax brackets it has been more beneficial to donate property to a nonprofit organization than to sell it and be liable for capital gains tax. With a property donation of this kind, the museum gets a facility with few strings attached, and the donor can write off a sum equal to the market value of the property. A related model is the facility constructed by a developer who keeps it to write off major depreciation over a period in excess of 15 years. When the benefit of the tax advantage has been exhausted, the developer can get one final tax relief by donating the facility to the museum.

### Charitable Remainder Trust

This is an attractive arrangement for individuals who bequeath stock, bonds or property to the museum. During the donor's lifetime he or she can receive income from the trust while the principal (or the building) is the property of the museum. Upon the donor's death the trust income, too, reverts to the museum. Of course a property donation can be very tempting to a financially strapped institution. But the museum's needs must come first. A site or building that will not help the museum carry out its function (e.g., because of an unpromising location, inadequate shipping and receiving space, too many windows in the proposed gallery area) is not worth accepting; the gift horse should be looked in the face. The museum that enters into such an arrangement must retain the right to sell the property at a later date should it prove unsuitable.

### Acquiring Public or Government-Owned Buildings or Land

This scenario involves a direct transfer from one public group to another or an arrangement by which a local museum (not necessarily city owned) leases the facility from the city or county. The building in question may be an unused school, hospital or federal building. If the building remains public property, the



Two years ago the Grand Rapids Art Museum moved into a historic downtown post office building, which it leases from the city for \$1 a year.

museum will not need to pay property tax and may get maintenance service from the city. However, when a city is in need of funds, it obviously hopes to make money from the sale of the property. For a museum to be successful in this venture, it must head off the owner from putting it up for sale on the open market. Political strategy is crucial.

The Grand Rapids Art Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, used to be on the fringes of the downtown area. When its trustees began to look for a new site in 1973, city officials apprised them of the new Surplus Building Act, by the terms of which cities can cheaply acquire and find other uses for federal buildings no longer needed for their original purposes. In this instance, the city agreed to lease a historic post office building, in central downtown, to the museum for a token \$1 annual fee. The four-story-cum-basement facility has now been partially renovated, providing for 15,000 square feet of gallery space. The mail windows (for those who were wondering!) were transformed into small, glassed-in cases for the museum's decorative arts collection.

### Property in Tax Arrears

Property that has been foreclosed for nonpayment of mortgage or tax can be considered for a museum site. Such property is acquired by the city and sold to the highest bidder. After a year or two, if it has not sold,

the city and banks will want to get rid of it as quickly as possible. Of course the land will likely be in a poor neighborhood or the building badly dilapidated; if the property were currently valuable, the city would have been able to unload it for a higher price. Although this can be a real "deal," it is for the intrepid only. The museum stands to lose a large amount of money because of the bid process involved in acquiring such land parcels. Interested parties offer sealed bids for the amount they are prepared to pay. Ten to 20 percent of this figure will be required as a deposit. The winning bidder has 30 to 45 days to come up with the remainder of the money. This is the anxiety-producing part of the process. If the museum is unable to raise this sum, the deposit will be forfeited and the land or building lost. In addition, up to the moment of the actual closing, the owner can still reclaim the property by coming up with the money to pay the taxes or mortgage due.

### Sale/Leaseback Arrangements

Appropriate for a museum that already owns land and/or a building (whether donated or not), this arrangement involves selling the holding to a developer at market value. The buyer receives special tax benefits (accelerated depreciation and investment tax credit for renovation or new construction on the land) not available to nonprofit organizations. The museum pockets the capital from the sale, money on which—as a nonprofit entity—it need not pay capital gains tax. The purchaser then leases the property back to the museum for a period of more than 15 years. After the tax benefits have been exhausted, the

## Benefits of Sale/Leaseback Arrangements

Original Landowner <i>(if other than the museum)</i>	Museum	Developer
tax deduction on the appreciated value of the donated property	capital from the fully appreciated property	depreciation and other tax benefits (including investment tax credit for construction of the building) appreciated land value if a portion of the land is later sold for another use tax-deductible gift if the building is donated to the museum after the tax benefits have been exhausted

developer may wish to donate the property to the museum as a tax-deductible gift.

In Oakland, California, the city figured out how to rehabilitate its Civic Center Auditorium—a \$10 million project—on a nonexistent budget by selling the as-yet-unrehabilitated structure along with the city-owned Oakland Museum building to an investment partnership that could use the tax write-off. Oakart Associates, an investment syndicate, bought the museum building for \$22 million. On the strength of Oakart's promissory note to pay the outstanding cost of the museum, the city of Oakland issued a 30-year municipal improvement bond at an interest rate of 12.5 percent. The interest income from government securities is expected to enable the city to make lease payments on both the museum and auditorium, leaving enough money to allow for repurchase in 30 years.

Proceeds from the sale of the bonds will be used to renovate the auditorium and make other municipal improvements. The city continues to own the land and will lease back each of the buildings from the new owners to ensure their continued use.

Lease payments will be based on estimated costs of rehabilitation, ground rent and real estate taxes. At the end of the primary lease term (30 years), the city is permitted to repurchase the facilities at fair market value or lease them for an additional period—or abandon them. However, the repurchase of the museum

**The Oakland Museum was sold to a tax-shelter syndicate and leased back to the city in order to help finance the refurbishment of the Oakland Civic Center Auditorium. The city retained ownership of the museum collection as well as control over the facilities.**



has been provided for by the trust indenture created by the city, which will establish two special funds. The construction fund will be available for improvements; the capital fund will be used to make lease payments and to redeem or retire the outstanding bonds. Meanwhile, operation of both the auditorium and the museum remains in the city's hands, without any interference from Oakart Associates.

The process itself is taking place in two steps. First, the museum will be sold and leased back, Oakart Associates paying Oakland the fair market value of the museum—\$22 million—with a cash down payment and a purchase money mortgage for the balance. Proceeds from the sale will be used to pay back the principal and interest on the municipal improvement revenue bonds and make the initial lease payments to Oakart Associates. The second step is the sale and leaseback of the auditorium, to be renamed the Oakland Convention Center Extension. The proceeds from this sale—approximately \$20 million plus the costs of renovation—will be invested and the earned interest used to make all lease payments on the convention center and the remaining lease payments on the museum.

## Cultural Facilities in Commercial Centers

If a municipal government owns a particular site, terms of the sale may require the developer to set aside a portion of the property for a specific type of structure, such as an arts complex. Typically, this provision would be included in the land disposition agreement between the city agency and the private developer. The thinking behind a requirement of this nature is that a cultural facility can be the distinguishing feature of a commercial center—the “draw” that makes it different from the competition. In such a situation the developer may be willing to pay maintenance costs in the early years, thus freeing some of the cultural organization’s funding for program development.

In San Francisco, for example, the terms of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Yerba Buena Center (YBC) set aside 50,000 square feet of land for cultural uses. In the fall of 1980 the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency agreed to work with a community-wide group representing the local arts interests in order to define the range of facilities and arts programs for YBC. A year later the first phase of this process was concluded; it had developed the “showcasing” idea—theaters, galleries and other spaces presenting a wide range of cultural activities without duplicating existing spaces. No companies or groups are to be permanent residents of the center. Although there was at one time a possibility that the Asian Art Museum would want to locate in YBC, plans for such

a move (which would have required at least 200,000 square feet, according to the “white paper” commissioned by museum trustees) have not been pursued. However, the gallery space of 15,000 square feet, with approximately 10,000 square feet of support space—specified after a survey of potential visual arts users—remains a key aspect of the final report by the programming, design, management and finance committees of the arts community to the Redevelopment Agency, which has committed itself (in accordance with the RFQ) to seeking from the developer a significant contribution to capital and operating costs for the showcasing idea.

## Joint-Use Possibilities

In some cases, working out an agreement by which a museum will share a facility with another group—whether arts related or not—or will locate in a mixed-use center can be the answer to a real estate dilemma. Here are two ways this can work.

### JOINT USE OF AN OFFICE BUILDING

Joint use does not refer here to the all-too-frequent practice of hanging an art exhibition in an office lobby planned with no thought of accommodating art. When exhibition spaces are to be included in an office complex, they must be programmed right into the design of the building. Although such spaces can be “sold” to the business as an image boost targeted for clients and visitors, the museum must realize that the space it is allotted might not accommodate all the projects it has in mind. In addition, restrictions on programming may apply in the interest of providing a favorable climate for the dominant commercial activity (“depressing” or radical themes may be out; complex installations may be judged to pose a safety risk). Still, the opportunity to create a downtown branch (possibly during museum construction) or to initiate a modest museum while searching for bigger quarters should not be overlooked.

The Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris is a blue-chip example of the way this kind of partnership between business and art can work. Scheduled to open this spring at the company’s new world headquarters building in New York, the structure includes a street-level pedestrian plaza with a sculpture court specifically designed to hold major 20th-century works too large to fit in the Whitney Museum’s own space, in addition to a 1,100-square-foot gallery that will exhibit six shows a year. Philip Morris Incorporated supplies the space and pays all operating costs, including salaries of the Whitney Museum personnel who staff the gallery; the museum supplies the art and the curatorial expertise. All decisions regarding the type of art to be displayed are



Visitors to the Bellevue Art Museum, located on the third floor of a major shopping center, reach the entrance via a glass elevator.

to be solely in the hands of museum staff. Philip Morris' philanthropy in the arts is well known; this particular project came about because of the need to provide public space on the ground floor in exchange for a variance permitting the construction of an extra floor in the building. At the same time, the Whitney already had a downtown branch and was interested in establishing another one. Architect Ulrich Franzen—who created another Whitney outpost at the Champion International Corporation in Stamford, Connecticut—was careful to design the exhibition space so it could be closed off at night from other public areas of the building; details of this kind require close consultation with museum staff.

#### LOCATING IN A SHOPPING CENTER

Shopping centers are becoming more than just places to make purchases. According to the "leisure center" idea, the shopping center is a place of recreation. For a museum offered space in a shopping complex, location will be of prime importance. If art is really considered a draw by the developer, it should be positioned right up front where the action is. Typically, large department stores are given key positions as "anchors." At the other extreme, the remote upper floor of the shopping center generally requires some

special attraction (usually a restaurant) to lure shoppers up the escalators. When a museum is offered space on an upper floor, its presence must be advertised at ground level by kiosks or other displays, which may be stipulated by the museum in return for the traffic-generating "draw" the museum provides the shopping center developers.

Support from commercial tenants may be a benefit for cultural groups that relocate in a shopping center. Parking facilities are also provided. The identity of the organization, however, is in danger of becoming merged to some extent with that of the center. On a practical level, ceiling heights and finishes may be fixed at standards that are not optimum for a museum. To circumvent this problem, architectural specifications should be clarified at an early stage in the negotiations.

The Rouse Company, a publicly owned mortgage banking research and development company headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, has taken the lead in this marriage of commercial and arts interests. The firm, which owns or manages over 50 shopping centers in the United States and Canada, instituted its Art in the Marketplace program in 1957. Currently, nine museums and two art centers have been given gallery space, museum lighting, display cases, plantings, security and program funding for changing exhibits at shopping centers in their areas. Among the best known of these are Harborplace in Baltimore, which houses outposts of the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Maryland Historical Society and the Walters Art Gallery, and Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, Massachusetts, where the Museum of Fine Arts has been a tenant during construction of a new wing on its main building. It is the Rouse Company's policy to allocate over \$100,000 annually to the entire program (which also encompasses the performing arts), an amount that is increased by 10 percent each year and augmented by funding from public agencies and the private sector.

The Bellevue Art Museum in Bellevue, Washington, was located in a building adjacent to Bellevue Square, a shopping center about to undergo expansion. The center's developer, who sat on the board of the museum, proposed that the square's top (third) floor be made available to the museum for \$1 a year. Although this offer did not release the museum from leasehold costs, including common area maintenance fees and merchant association dues, the prospect of being located in the central business district with nearly double the amount of gallery space was irresistible. Despite the museum's third-floor location and the fact that walk-by traffic is a thing of the past, museum visits are up by three to four times the figure for the previous location. The glass elevator in the center of Bellevue Square stops right at the door of the



The Yale Center for British Art incorporates a row of small shops at street level that animate the facade and preserve the neighborhood's commercial character.

museum, leading shoppers to a quiet oasis away from the hustle and bustle. One staff member has noted that square employees visit the museum in order to "get away from all that activity."

### Private Enterprise: The Museum in the Developer's Role

Mixed-use cultural projects combining revenue-producing units with a museum are probably the most exciting of all real estate innovations affecting cultural organizations. In the 1960s combining such amenities as plazas, hotels and theaters with office space was perceived as a way of revitalizing the American city. Of course museums have long been involved in mixed-use ventures on a smaller scale by virtue of their housing restaurants and bookstores within their doors. But the major mixed-use projects that depend on commercial entities to help offset capital and operating costs are complex creations, requiring the close guidance of professional advisors. The sizable risks involved and the need to weigh tax advantages carefully make it imperative that the museum work with economic research and development firms, tax lawyers and investment consultants in formulating a successful strategy.

One example of a museum in the developer's role is the Yale Center for British Art, which opened in 1977 and occupies a four-story building in downtown New Haven, Connecticut. A portion of the ground floor and basement of the building (totaling over 18,000 square feet) houses shops and a restaurant whose owners pay rent to Yale University. Since most "passive" income of a nonprofit corporation (including dividends, royalties, capital gains and rental income) is not subject to federal taxation, Yale is exempt from what would normally be a tax drain. The university must, however, pay property tax to New Haven, and the net income of the businesses is taxable. In this case the link with commercial interests came about not as a money-raising venture for the museum but as a way of preserving the commercial nature of the street and the city's taxable income from a prime downtown site.

Issues at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) are much more complex. The museum sold its air rights to a private developer, who is building a 44-story apartment tower on top of the new six-story west wing of the museum. If the museum were to have negotiated this arrangement directly, it would have had to pay taxes on the "unrelated business income" represented by the income from this development. Fortunately MOMA is able to benefit from the Trust for Cultural Resources, a public benefit corporation established via the New York City Cultural Resources Act of 1976. The trust is able to undertake combined-

use development on behalf of New York State cultural institutions that meet its specifications.

The development—the condominiums—will produce tax-equivalency payments that will be used by the trust to repay the cost of the museum's expansion program over a long period of time. In the meantime the trust floated bonds, with the museum offering \$31 million of its endowment as collateral. These funds, along with the \$17 million from the air rights sale, are being held in escrow. During the time the tower is under construction, the developer pays a minimum amount in tax-equivalency fees. Then, during the first 10 years after the tower is completed, these payments increase by 20 percent every two years. Finally, 10 years after the tower is built, its owners (the individual owners of the condominiums) will be liable for the full amount of the real estate equivalency tax. This 10-year abatement is a common arrangement in New York City; no special privileges have been granted to either the developer or the apartment-owners-to-be under the legislation that set up the trust. The novel aspect of the arrangement derives from the fact that property owned by the museum and therefore not subject to taxation is being used to generate a source of income for the museum's expansion costs. As the tax-equivalency payments come in, they are used first to pay administrative costs and then to retire the debt—by paying debt service on the bond as well as paying back the museum.

As of early March 1983 about one-quarter of the luxury condominiums were sold, a figure that some see as less than encouraging. Even if the developer defaults, however, or the tax-equivalency payments are never made in full, the museum will not suffer. The debt on the bond will be repaid over the life of the bond as income on the collateral fund; this income will be applied to cover debt charges. As one MOMA official working closely with this project remarked, "We are fully isolated from the developer's risk."

More problems would likely surface if a museum in a parklike setting decided to take on the developer's role. Public outcries against the encroachment of commercial ventures on open land and the loss of a long-standing cultural ambience may be difficult to counter. No matter what the situation, museums considering a project of this type must notify the local powers-that-be. Issues of transportation (how handy is the area to the proposed commercial or other tenants?), zoning laws (will variances make political enemies of certain factions in town?), the potential market for all elements of the mixed-use package, and profitability must all be seriously considered.

In fact, any museum contemplating any one of the scenarios described here must consider all the possible effects it may have on community relations.



"You're on the wrong floor.  
The Museum of Modern Art is downstairs."

Drawing by Levin © 1983 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

And, even if everything augurs well, the museum must be certain that, by committing itself to one of these schemes, it does not lose sight of its ultimate goals. After all, real estate and its attendant concerns are not the real business of any museum—they are only a means to ensure that it will still be visible and operating at full speed in the years to come. △

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**M**useum studies programs are multifaceted and multidisciplinary academic programs developed by universities in consultation with museum professionals to prepare people for the museum profession. The programs vary in degrees offered, disciplinary association, relationship between museology and discipline, and specific requirements, and museum professionals agree that diversity is desirable. They further recognize that museum studies programs "are not and should not be considered the only or necessarily the best routes into the museum profession."<sup>1</sup>

Museum studies programs have proliferated in the last 15-20 years, and professional organizations in the museum field have expressed concern regarding the content, direction, quality and effectiveness of these programs. In 1973 the American Association of Museums established the Museum Studies Curriculum Committee, which suggested curriculum, among other things, for programs offering degree credit in undergraduate junior and senior years and at the graduate level.<sup>2</sup> Several years later the AAM set up the Museum Studies Committee, which in 1978 presented "Minimum Standards for Professional Museum Training Programs."<sup>3</sup> That same year the International Council of Museums Committee for the Training of Personnel also developed minimum standards for university-based training programs.<sup>4</sup>

In 1981 the AAM's president, Craig Black, asked the Professional Practices Committee, chaired by THOMAS W. LEAVITT, to examine the feasibility of accrediting graduate museum studies programs. A subcommittee was formed: BARBARA H. BUTLER, Museum Studies Program, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, served as chairman; other members were GEORGE ABRAMS, Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, Salamanca, New York; MALCOLM ARTH, American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York; RICHARD ESPARZA, San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California; JANE GLASER, Office of Museum Programs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; MARY ELIZABETH KING, University Museum, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico; and DANIEL PORTER, New York Historical Society, Cooperstown, New York. RANDI GLICKBERG served as AAM staff liaison.

The subcommittee discussed the information that would be necessary in order to make a recommendation regarding the accreditation of museum studies programs. It agreed that a feasibility study should include, among other considerations, estimated costs of implementation, the approximate number of institutions that have graduate museum studies programs and, most important, some measures for evaluation. A full study of accreditation, although extremely important, was considered too large an undertaking for this ephemeral subcommittee. In addition, opinions were informally expressed that an accreditation plan is probably not economically feasible at this time. But because the lack of comprehensive guidelines for developing and evaluating graduate museum studies pro-

# Criteria for Examining Professional Museum Studies Programs



grams is serious, the subcommittee decided to prepare a program self-study outline, which can ultimately be a part of an accreditation plan. The essential components of a museum studies program were defined and criteria for assessing them developed.

The subcommittee's purpose is to present guidelines that will assist a graduate museum studies program in setting its goals and objectives. The intent is to provide approved guidelines while permitting flexibility for individual programs. Equally important, these criteria can also be used for a periodic examination of the program from both an internal and external perspective. These "Criteria for Examining Professional Museum Studies Programs" were adopted by the Council of the American Association of Museums in January 1983.

## Goals and Objectives

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### RATIONALE

A museum studies graduate program must have clearly defined and publicly stated goals that will provide a frame of reference for internal and external evaluation and meet the qualifications of both the university and the museum profession. It is important to the quality of the museum studies program that a philosophical basis be adopted compatible with that of the American Association of Museums. The unique purposes of museums — the increase, care and interpretation of collections of art, natural history specimens, artifacts, structures and sites — must be recognized by a museum studies program.

### CRITERIA

The appropriateness of a program's goals and objectives is a clear indication of its effectiveness. The statement of purpose should include the philosophical stance that serves as a guide for planning and a frame of reference for evaluation; a description of the status of the program at the university; a description of the kind of credential offered and the relationship between academic specialties and museology; identification of the museum positions for which students will be prepared; and objectives appropriate to the instructional purposes, including a means of continuous evaluation of the program.

In addition, the goals and objectives should reflect museological standards as presented in major documents and policy statements of the American Association of Museums and its affiliated organizations;<sup>5</sup> the history, philosophy and ethics of museums and the roles of museum professionals and museums in a multicultural society; the needs of the constituency, both individuals and institutions, that the program seeks to serve; a strong interrelationship between museum studies and other disciplines; an opportunity for museological research and its dissemination; an established working relationship with museum professionals; a formal relationship with at least one accredited or accreditable museum; and the importance of the practical learning experience within the structure of the program. If the university offers more than one museum-related program leading to a graduate degree, the scope and nature of each should be clearly defined and the relationship, if any, among them outlined or described.

### EVIDENCE

- Written statement of purpose; published announcements and descriptions in catalogs, bulletins, brochures; copies of proposals and program justifications submitted to university committees and administration.
- Description of the procedures and results of internal review and assessment; review by students and alumni; external reviews; description of the mechanism for maintaining responsiveness to the museum field.

- Course outlines and descriptions of the structure of the degree granting process.
- Copies of grant proposals submitted to funding agencies.

## Curriculum

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### RATIONALE

Knowledge of the theory, methodology and practice of museology consistent with contemporary national and international standards of performance is essential for competency in museum work. Basic for a graduate-level museum studies curriculum is a learning environment conducive to fostering a spirit of interdisciplinary inquiry and discovery; to developing the ability to conceptualize, plan, analyze, synthesize and evaluate; to understanding collegiality; to maintaining high intellectual and ethical principles; and to recognizing that work in the museum field is institutional in nature.

A museum studies curriculum should combine the study of an academic specialty with the study of museology and museography, acknowledge the diversity among museums and recognize uniformly high methodological and theoretical standards.

### CRITERIA

A museum studies curriculum, which is by its very nature multidisciplinary, must have clearly stated objectives that are compatible with the needs of the field at large and appropriate to the museum positions for which the students are being educated. It is recognized that there is no single standard curriculum for museum studies<sup>6</sup> or for defining the relationship between academic specialties and museology. The curriculum should be structured to provide students with opportunities to pursue academic or disciplinary interests as well as museological interests, and the balance between them should be consistent with the objectives of the program. It may provide for midcareer learning in certifiable specialties.

The curriculum should include the historical, contemporary and future nature and role of museums in society; the governance and management of museums; ethical and legal aspects of museum operations; planned growth and management of museum collections; preservation, presentation and interpretation of collections; maintenance of physical facilities; the conduct of education and outreach programs; and evaluation of museum programs. It should provide a balance between the intellectual and the pragmatic, have a boldness of scope together with intensive emphases and meet the needs of students considering employment in various types and sizes of museums, positions and geographic regions. The curriculum should be periodically evaluated and revised as necessary.

Students should be given opportunities for formal instruction, individual research and practical experience

*(continued on page 99)*

# A More Certain and Precise Perimeter

*An Interview with Sherman E. Lee*

PAMELA M. BANKS AND DAVID W. EWING

**S**HERMAN E. LEE, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art for 25 years, retires this June. Throughout his tenure as director, Lee has also served as chief curator of Oriental art. An enumeration of his accomplishments as a scholar and a museum director would be lengthy and impressive, but inadequate given his considerable contributions to the way we think about museums.

We thought it most appropriate to let Sherman Lee speak for himself. This interview was conducted by two editors from the *Harvard Business Review*—PAMELA M. BANKS, manuscript editor, and DAVID W. EWING, managing editor. Their questions highlight the esthetic and practical problems an administrator faces in running an art museum. Lee's responses reveal his management style and philosophy and offer insights into everything from the social role of museums to exhibition design. The interview was followed by a gallery walk and some informal observations on objects Lee selected as representative of the museum's collection.

—Ed.

In "The Museum in Today's Society," you wrote that "the art museum is to be a primary source of wonder and delight for mind and heart."<sup>1</sup> Would you expand on that notion of primary source for us?

Well, let's begin by saying that the name of an institution has a great deal to do with what it is doing. We don't call this the Cleveland Museum of Art just because it is a nice sounding series of words. It is in Cleveland, and its primary responsibility is to bring art to the citizens of this area. It is not fundamentally concerned with therapy, illustrating history, social action, entertainment or scientific research but with being a basic art resource institution. We distinguish between ethnological and historical material on the one hand and works of art on the other.

The word *art* in the name is very important. We take art to be not just any old thing that happens to be made, but works that show an unusual degree of

skill and understanding and imagination. So it isn't enough to have a Rembrandt—you've got to have a fine Rembrandt.

Then, too, a museum is a primary source in that it deals with images. An image is as much an idea as a sentence. Words are not the only way you can affect the mind. Simply putting a picture on a wall or a sculpture on a pedestal or an object in a case is in itself an educational and a humanistic act, so that a museum that has fine works of art on display under good circumstances already has a strong educational component.

*You've also said that you believe people can appreciate works of art only if they go through some of the creative process themselves, if they get their hands into some paint or use some drawing pencils for a while. Do you still think that's true?*

Yes, I do indeed. I sometimes think that one of the curses of art history is that it emphasizes words more than images. It stresses documentation and source material more than esthetic imagery and the material means by which an object is made. I've gotten almost perverse in my desire to go back to the old method called art appreciation, which so many hate now because it's such an old-fashioned idea.

I think there are far too many words written about art today. Sometime I would love to have an exhibition with no labels at all—just display works of art in the best possible circumstances and, by the way they're shown and related, stimulate people to think in terms of images instead of words. But most people in American society and in Western post-Renaissance society like words with exhibits. That's why there are jam-ups at exhibitions—not because people are looking at the objects but because they're reading the labels.

*We found your exhibition Visions of Landscape: East and West very exciting, partly because it didn't emphasize history and partly because the viewer comes upon words about the objects only after having a very strong visual experience. You placed labels and*



comments only every once in a while, and you emphasized rocks and mountains and sea and sky. You put together very different works—Leon Kirchner's trees right next to Kantenju's brush painting of trees and Monet's Beach at Pourville next to a landscape by the old Dutch master Aelbert de Cuyp. Did you put this exhibit together with the desire to focus on images in mind?

Yes, and we've done this in at least two other exhibitions. One was *Juxtapositions*, which put widely disparate works of art in terms of cultural and chronological origin together because the artists seemed to be dealing with the same problems in materials and images. It was very interesting to see how an archaic Greek sculpture went with a Brancusi, for example. And another time we did an exhibition of small pieces that implied sizes much greater than their dimensions. It was called *Small in Size, Great in Art* and was another effort to use the permanent collection in new and different ways so that people would get a fresh look at what they'd seen before.

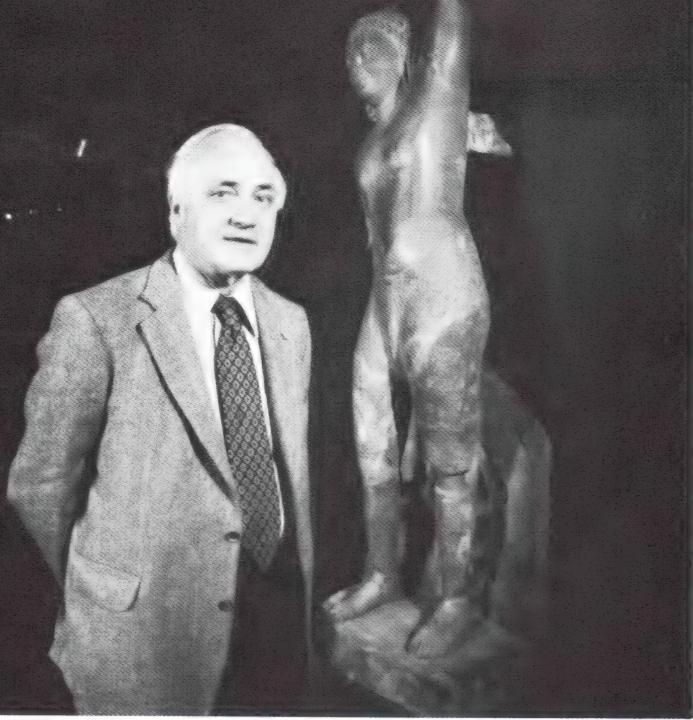
We have arranged the permanent collection chronologically by cultures though, and I believe very

Throughout his tenure as director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Sherman Lee has served as chief curator of Oriental art.

strongly that that's the way to do it. History is the matrix that contains the works, and it's important not to shake it up all the time. But from time to time it's good to extract things from the permanent collection and make displays of this other kind in the special galleries.

Some people think they can tell good quality from bad just by looking, that the sense of quality is something built into a person. I think that is a very primitive and also very snobbish point of view. Standards of value and judgment are built up by comparisons over a long period of time, and until you have built up enough comparisons and have had enough time to get a consensus from people who are interested in art and who have taken the time to make comparisons, you really have no solid ground for evaluation.

By the very fact that it shows something, an art museum says to the spectator, "You know, this is something very good, and you ought to pay close at-



## KRISHNA GOVARDHANA

This statue of gray limestone from 7th-century Cambodia is a representation of the Hindu deity Krishna holding up Mount Govardhan and protecting the villagers below from torrential rains. It's a famous subject in Hindu mythology. When Adolph Stoclet, the great collector of Oriental and medieval art in Brussels, acquired the torso in 1923, it immediately became famous. Now it's reproduced in practically every book on Indian and Southeast Asian art.

There's a marvelous monumentality in the volume of the chest and a tension that goes around from back to front, into the arm holding up the mountain, and through the straight leg to the foot. And there's a superb smile on the face. Without strain, Krishna is holding up this tremendous weight. Gratuitously he is performing this great act for the people. Stoclet was so enamored of the look that when he was dying he asked to be wheeled before it, and he died there.

When we got the torso in 1973, we knew that some archeologists had given Stoclet some limestone arms and legs that they thought had originally been part of it. We tracked the pieces down to a house next to Stoclet's—to a spot where they were buried in the garden. After a lot of persuasion, we convinced the owner to let us excavate. And our conservator, Fred Hollendonner, took the pieces we dug up and tried to work out the proper placement. You can see that some areas are highly polished and others are rough and dull. Hollendonner deliberately left them that way so that you can see what's original and what isn't. What he did enhances what was already a great work, I think. It's one of our greatest treasures.

tention to it." I'm not a hundred percent sure that many of our art museums, including this one, are in a position to make that judgment about contemporary works, for instance. You can become terribly enthusiastic about something, but you really are just doing a personal "I like it." That's all right, but that's not enough for an art museum.

*But you do run the May Show each year, which is the display of contemporary local artists' work.*

Yes, that's an important tradition going back to 1919. And it's a pragmatic situation. The arts are not uppermost in the minds of the American public. The degree of interest and commitment to art that exists in countries like Japan and Austria just doesn't exist in the United States. We hear that we've had a cultural explosion, but the fact is that far more people go bowling or to football games or rock concerts than to art museums. And therefore, all arts organizations in this country must take some responsibility toward the artistic community of their own time.

During the Depression, when artists were in such a desperate situation, the May Show served as a major sales outlet for them, and that continued into the 1950s. In the early exhibitions people displayed crafts such as handmade lace and furniture. And the crafts component here in Cleveland is still very strong. It's one of the reasons that the Cleveland Museum has developed a collection of decorative arts. The second director, William Milliken, was a major decorative arts man, and the presence here of great medieval enamels and Chinese and European ceramics acquired under his direction has had a considerable influence on local artists.

*Under your direction, the museum has developed still more. Would you like to see it grow more than it already has?*

As far as future directions go, I'm afraid that I'm not very sanguine about "onward and upward." For any museum other than a great nationally supported encyclopedic museum like the Metropolitan in New York, there's an optimum size. It's very dangerous to go beyond that size because inevitably there's a tightening of the money supply and then the museum is in big trouble. For the Cleveland Museum, I can imagine small additions, but I would say that it has just about reached its optimum size. I think its future development will be in refinement. Our educational work will increase, and the use of our permanent collection is going to be even more important than it has been.

*Your latest museum calendar says that all of the shows you have going on now are composed entirely of works from the permanent collection. Does that mean you consider the collection nearly complete?*



Oh no. We are certainly interested in continuing to collect, but we're going to collect far more selectively. We can't make acquisitions at the pace we've kept in the last 40 years because we don't have the room and because the works we'd want aren't available. We already have a good representation of almost all of the world's creative cultures.

We are very fortunate. We have substantial purchase income, which is legally designated for acquisitions. We have means not many other museums have. Money spent for purchases from 1930 through 1979 totaled \$53.8 million. Gifts and bequests over the same length of time were \$18 million.

Now, prints and drawings we can add to. They're small and flat, and they store easily. They shouldn't be exposed to light constantly, so they have to be stored away for their own safety a certain percentage of the time, and therefore we can rotate them and put up a great variety of exhibitions. The same thing is true of Chinese, Korean and Japanese paintings, which should not be exposed constantly, so they're rolled up and stored in a compact area.

In the museum's Oriental study room Lee works on *Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art* with Michael Cunningham, associate curator, and James Ulak, a Ph.D. candidate at Case Western Reserve University.

On the other hand, if we're talking about, let's say, large-scale altar pieces of the 17th century, there is a limit. You can't just take them down, put them away, and then bring them up again. Small pictures and sculpture allow more flexibility. We can store pictures and rotate them to the galleries from time to time, and sculptures go in places that pictures do not: sculptures are out where visitors can walk around them or in cases in spots where we couldn't put pictures. Most museums in the United States are weak in sculpture, so I think collecting it is an important aspect of museum building here.

*Are you yourself instrumental in obtaining works for the collection?*

Some of them, yes. The director is the artistic director of the institution and has a say in what happens as far



as exhibitions and collections go. We have a mutual veto system. Only if a curator recommends something and I do too does it go before the acquisitions committee. If a curator has a very strong liking for something and compelling reasons to acquire it and if the work has characteristics that I recognize as good quality even though I don't particularly care for it, the work can still be considered for acquisition. I'll go along with it.

*Has the museum obtained many of its works of art from bequests and then built around them, or have the curators and directors initiated most of the collecting?*

One of the things that makes the Cleveland Museum different from many other museums is that while bequests and gifts have played an important part in the development of the collections, purchases through professional staff activity and the review of the trustees have been more important. And it shows in the collections. That's one of the reasons there's a better balance and a higher level of quality than oftentimes you find.

Fortunately, from the very early days of the museum, starting with the first purchase fund that was made available in 1926 by J. H. Wade, donors have tended to give money rather than objects and to let the museum do the selecting. There are certain nota-

ble exceptions. There was, for instance, the bequest of John L. Severance in 1942, which included, among other things, the great Turner *Burning of the Houses of Parliament* and the portrait of the Misses York by Reynolds, both masterpieces of British painting. And Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., left us his collection of impressionist and postimpressionist paintings, which is very fine indeed. But at least 75 percent of the objects on display were acquired by purchase through the staff and trustee acquisitions committee.

*Turning now to the board of trustees, what do you consider its responsibility to be?*

Its main job is to provide for the financial future of the museum. There's no question that independence and the ability to maintain standards and do all the things we'd like to can't be done without money. There's a critical mass of money that you have to have if you're going to run a really fine institution, and if you're scrabbling for money all the time, you come to crises, and when you have crises, you have confrontations and emotional problems—and then you get new directors.

*Do you look to the trustees for guidance on policy and administration?*

I want them to be supportive and strongly enthusiastic about the idea of the art museum as a special place where quality is paramount and where great works of art are made available to everyone. For example, one of the continuing discussions that we have had over the past 15 or 20 years has been about charging admission. I have always flatly taken the position that we should not charge admission, and I have supported this position by all kinds of arguments and rationalizations. But I've never had to argue the case more than five or 10 minutes because the trustees sense that this is a basically sound policy for this institution.

In addition, I want the trustees to be appreciative of staff effort, and I want to see to it that we have what can be called academic freedom. None of us has tenure. Everybody, including the trustees, serves on a year-to-year basis, yet this is the hardest place in the world for an individual to be released from because of the sense of responsibility we all have.

*Does the board ever make decisions on esthetic questions?*

The trustees are interested in the general quality of the museum—that it be a high-quality institution,

Lee and assistant conservator Paula DeCristofaro examine the condition of Thomas Cole's *Schroon Mountain, the Adirondacks* (1838) before approving its loan to an international exhibition.



that it continue to develop its collections, that it run efficiently and smoothly and that the outgo not exceed the income. Through its accessions committee, the board considers works of art that are up for acquisition, but other than that it does not make artistic judgments. My staff and I do that. If we keep within our budget, the trustees allow us our esthetic freedom.

*Some writers and consultants on the management of arts organizations believe that the days of the "artistic czar" are numbered, that the director should not always expect people like trustees who deal with the business side of the museum to go along with the people who deal with the art side. Do you agree with this notion?*

I don't think the days of the artistic czar are over if by artistic czar you mean the director as the person primarily responsible for the museum's style and its major functions. If that's czarship, why then, long live the czar!

As for collaborating with the business side, it all depends on what decisions you're talking about. Business people certainly know more about some things than we art professionals do, and we'd be well advised to pay attention to their opinions about those things. But it's equally certain that there are things we know far more about than they do, and it's a disaster if we give in to their opinions on those subjects. We have to know when to say no, and that sometimes means being unpopular, with both the business community and the community in general.

When mystics try to define deity they usually tend to do it in terms of negatives: It's not this, it's not that. Using negatives is as good a way of defining something as using positives, and I think we have to use it in art. An art museum is not the same kind of institution as a corporation. I don't think many business assumptions are valid for the art museum. We must not think of it in terms of a balance sheet (even though we try to be in the black each year and usually succeed). I think many museums have been put in financial jeopardy and have been mismanaged by the misapplication of business principles.

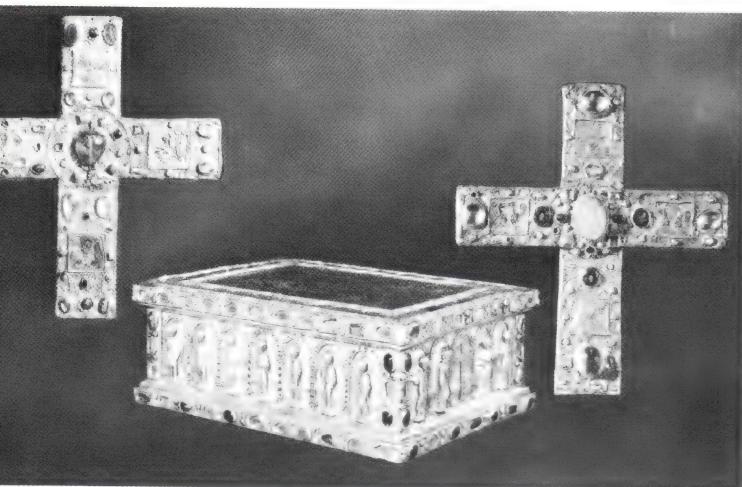
*But sometimes, you've indicated, the art side must give in to the business side.*

For example, many museums spend far too much money on installation of special exhibitions. As a matter of fact, I would go so far as to say that in some cases it's almost a public scandal because what they have done is let the means become more important than the ends. In the installation of a show, having everything just so with the richest materials and with a procedure that involves many consultants and so on can drive the cost of installation up very, very high. Good planning in designing special exhibition areas that are flexible and can easily be changed by in-house work reduces these costs enormously.

When we had the big Korean exhibition here—*5,000 Years of Korean Art*—it looked very good in both our special galleries. After it closed, I got a telephone call from the exhibitions manager of a large in-

## THE GUELPH TREASURE

The Guelph Treasure is displayed at the heart of the museum, as it properly should be. It's a portable altar, two crosses and six other liturgical pieces made by medieval craftsmen for the Countess Gertrude of the house of Brunswick. They



are some of the greatest examples of early romanesque goldsmith work—and of the enamelist's art and early medieval sculpture too. The little figures on the altar are all beautifully proportioned and made in the linear, eclectic style of the year 1000 in Europe.

This is the major part of the treasure. Museums in Berlin acquired the rest. We bought these nine objects from the dukes of Brunswick during the depths of the Depression for a half million dollars. Naturally certain members of the board seriously questioned whether spending so much at that time was a smart thing to do, but William Milliken, the director and curator of decorative arts, persuaded the board, and rightly so, that this was a unique opportunity to acquire a major work.

More than anything else, that single purchase at that time put everyone on notice that the Cleveland Museum was not going to be an ordinary general art museum. It meant that Cleveland was going to have a great medieval collection, that it wasn't just a museum for pictures and that policy and not mass appeal was going to be the dominant force.

stitution that was going to have the exhibition too. He said, "I've put in \$250,000 for installation. Do you think that's enough?" And I said, "You're not going to like what I say when I tell you that the total cost for the installation here was only \$5,000." Keeping expenses in hand by finding less expensive ways to do things is, I suppose, a business method, and it may be perfectly appropriate for running a museum.

*Do you do long-range planning here?*

We have five-year projections, which we began a dozen or so years ago, and they have proved to be more or less inaccurate. According to all the original projections, we were supposed to be operating at a deficit some time ago, but we're still not.

We do have problems involving capital expansion. Planning is needed there. If we wish to expand gallery space or library space, which we would like to do, we're going to have to go out and get the dough for it. Basically, however, the museum isn't a five-year- or a 10-year-goal institution. It's both for the here and now and for a long time ahead, further than we can possibly see—500 years ahead to generations as yet unborn. Its function in society, as I've tried to indicate, is so specific and so carefully circumscribed that the usual kind of five-year plan is not very effective.

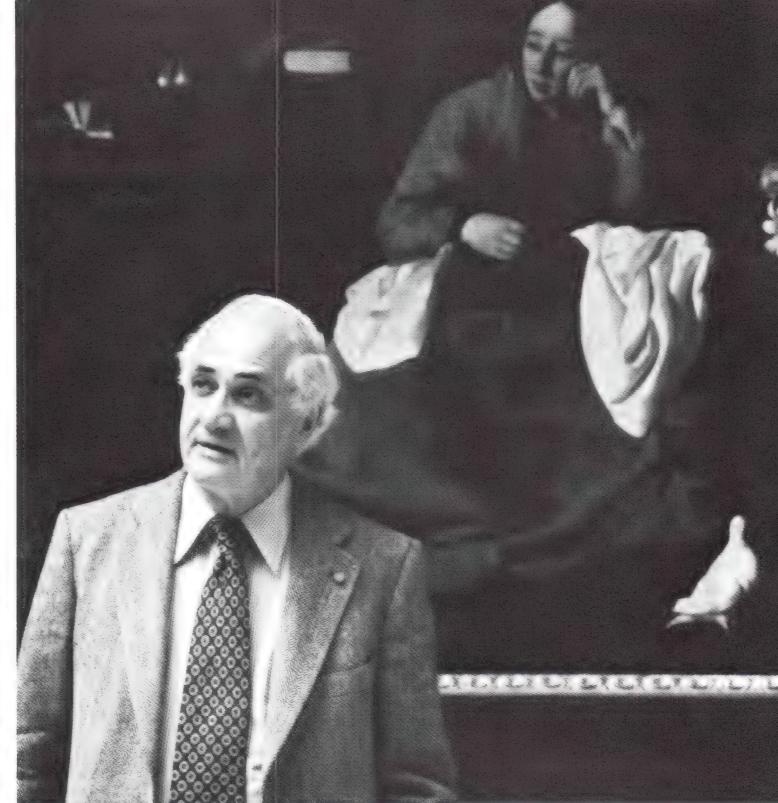
*Has the museum's art strategy—procurement of works of art, for instance—changed over the years?*

Yes, the purchase funds have been allocated differently. From 1930 to 1958 the museum emphasized the acquisition of decorative arts. When I became director, I recommended that we have a long-term plan of developing a European painting collection, and for years a major part of the purchase funds went to European paintings. We also made a decision to develop our collections of ancient art and Oriental art. These represent long-range goals, but we didn't write up any plans for achieving them.

*The only planning you have on paper, then, is the budget?*

The budget is the most important single document in this institution. We have a careful budget-making process that the trustees are satisfied with. Indeed, they think it's excellent from a business point of view.

When the budget is prepared, many decisions are made for one or two years ahead, but collections and exhibitions are not easily planned. You might say, "All right, this year we're going to spend X thousand dollars on special exhibitions." Four weeks later you get a letter from some place that makes it possible for you to get a very important exhibition that you feel you must have. For example, the government may



### ZURBARAN'S HOLY HOUSE OF NAZARETH

With its limestone walls and its collection of armor, this gallery is reminiscent of the Escorial in Spain, and so we have our Spanish pictures here: El Greco and Ribera, Murillo and Goya, Velasquez and Zurbaran. Velasquez may be a bigger name, but in this case, I think the Zurbaran qualifies as a genuine masterpiece, that is, a work so important and so beautiful within an artist's career that you can never adequately discuss that artist without referring to that work.

Zurbaran painted in the first half of the 17th century, principally for monasteries and churches in southern Spain, and he developed a style that is in a sense ascetic—very spare, very sharp, everything separated from everything else, and yet related by the very thin atmosphere he has in his rooms and unified by a light coming from a single source. You can see this kind of separateness in the still life on the table and the clay pot with the water on the left. Each thing is isolated, almost as if it were under the Carthusian discipline, in which monks are bound by a vow not to talk to one another. This isolation of objects is characteristic of Zurbaran's art.

The additive power of the isolation produces a picture with a feeling of loneliness and impending tragedy, which is what the picture is all about. The Christ Child is making a crown of thorns and has pricked his finger; He is squeezing a drop of blood from the tip. The Virgin looks at Him sadly, with a tear coming down her cheek. In this interior domestic scene we see the passion of Christ prefigured. It's a very moving, splendid picture.



Lee and Cunningham examine a 12th-century Japanese *sutra*, a handscroll with illustrated Buddhist scriptures.

have decided to air condition the national museum and while the renovation takes place to circulate a collection of paintings. How are you going to figure that out in advance? You can't. You can only plan in terms of plant and financial management and things of that sort.

#### *What about unexpected budget overruns?*

Our major overruns, when they do occur, are usually in special exhibitions, in part because we don't have full control—prices can go up in transportation, insurance costs can rise, a museum may insist that a courier come with a piece instead of having it shipped the normal way, and so on. On the other hand, there are some areas where we can tighten up and make a little money, in which case we can compensate for the overruns.

In the past we have not insisted that each segment of the budget be precisely right or in the black. We have aimed at the idea that the overall budget should be black or close to it, with room for some play and variation in priorities within the various items in it.

#### *The museum's artistic desires must conflict often with its budgetary limits. How do you keep the two in balance?*

There are three possible approaches, I suppose. You can operate under the theory that you produce first an ideal version of something or other—an exhibition, a library, a display in a gallery, an installation of a per-

manent collection—and you can then start doing it and find out how much it costs. Or you can take the opposite approach and say, "We have X thousand dollars to spend on this particular item, and we'll begin doing it, but we're going to stay within that amount." This may mean that halfway through you have to stop because you've gone to the end of your money.

I don't think either of these ways is the right one. The third way is to work the two approaches together. We're quite willing to make compromises in details of finish and so forth as long as they are not obtrusive. We will tolerate a rough edge on a partition or a painted surface instead of a cloth surface because we think these details are not as important as the works of art to be displayed.

You begin with a budget, but at the same time you have an idea for the exhibition or whatever it is. You then analyze the idea and see if you think it is going to be possible within the budget. If it isn't, you have to make a decision. You're going to have to raise the budget, in which case something else has to suffer, or you're going to have to change the idea so that maybe it isn't perfect but is as near perfect as possible. It really requires compromise beforehand rather than compromise halfway through or a tremendous overrun at the end.

*You're a scholar and a writer at the same time that you're deeply involved in administration. How do you manage to get both things done?*

I'm not very good at scheduling time in rigid ways. I don't sit down in advance and decide how to divide up my time. For instance, administration has taken more and more of my time in the last few years simply because I've been involved in outside activities like the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities and the American Arts Alliance and other projects. I have let it happen. Still, I find I can keep doing some research at the museum. There are slow spots, so that I can do some reading or get up to the library and look up some things in a rather hit-or-miss way. Over a period of a few months, this approach produces the necessary material. I am usually in the museum Saturday mornings, when no one else is here, and that's when I work on research projects.

As for writing, I find it impossible in the library. I should schedule a block of time for it, but I can't because there are too many necessary interruptions. So all my writing is done at home, where I have a fairly good working library.

*On a typical day, then, you don't have a schedule of appointments.*

I try to stay accessible. If someone wants to see me anytime, he can. He doesn't have to wait two or three days. Also, I like to pop into the galleries and depart-



ments fairly often to see what's going on. So I don't schedule everything. I tend to flow with things as they come up and take advantage of opportunities as they develop.

If the conservation department is working on a very important painting, the curator of painting wants to know about it, but I want to know about it, too. Staff members can't schedule the points at which they are going to require decisions. When they need a decision — "Should we go ahead further on this thing?" or "We've got a problem here, and what should we do about it?" — they get on the phone and I go.

*When you have your administrative hat on, how do you spend your time?*

Some problems are brought to my office. If, say, the designer says he wants blue and the curator says he wants red and they can't resolve the dispute between

Lee's contributions will be reflected in Oriental art history and museum management long past his retirement this June.

them, then they come to me and I decide. That prospect sometimes makes them decide things among themselves, you see. But I don't want everybody to come to me; I want to go to them, too, to see what's going on.

For example, I take a keen interest in the design and installation of exhibitions. The designer has a model of the special exhibition areas, and he goes over it with the curator, and they produce a layout that they think they like. I go up and look at it and discuss it. We may take it as it is. We may make some changes. We may decide we have to start all over again. I said I don't get much writing done in the museum, and now you see why.

*(continued on page 109)*

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# The Capital Campaign

MICHAEL C. KIEFER

**T**he most visible sign of the growth and popularity, reach and importance of American museums is the new construction, renovation and other capital improvements with which museums, often stunningly, have graced our national landscape in recent decades. Extending, expanding and transforming their humanizing influence, museums continue to enhance their physical presences before the very eyes whose ways of perceiving the world they challenge and invigorate through exhibitions and educational programs.

Capital expenditures by museums have provided the American public with some of the most graceful and monumental architecture in the nation. Needed exhibition and gallery space, offices, sculpture courts and new or renovated auditoriums have taken shape. Expenditures of capital have also made it possible for museums to keep pace with advances in lighting and climate control, to create more storage space and reorganize existing space for new or expanded use. Member rooms and income-producing museum shops and restaurants have been built or enlarged.

Ensuring the continued quality of programs, the preservation of museum objects and the long-term well-being of institutions, these programs of capital development are part and parcel of the contemporary museum world. So, too, are capital campaigns, the most visible, most dynamic, often-dreaded mammoths of fund raising.

The capital campaign is a major, in-

tensive and carefully orchestrated effort to raise funds for a specific capital project or other program that has evolved from a museum's long-range planning. Universities, hospitals, associations and museums are but a few of the many types of nonprofit organizations on whose behalf volunteer campaigners, institutional officials and professional counseling firms across the nation launch hundreds of capital campaigns each year.

As differentiated from other fund-raising activities, a capital campaign:

- seeks philanthropic support in the form of multiyear pledges for a specific project or group of projects;
- has a fixed dollar objective of considerable magnitude—from hundreds of thousands to hundreds of millions of dollars;
- adheres to a rigorous and intensive timetable;
- occurs no more than once every five years and, more often, only once a decade or less in the life of a museum;
- sets extensive public relations and publicity activities in motion;
- uses (as no other fund-raising activity does) the resources of available volunteer leaders and campaigners with defined roles, campaign titles and lines of authority, who are trained in the fine art of face-to-face solicitation of major gifts; and
- often uses professional counsel to complement and build upon the work of institutional development officers.

Given "contributable" dollars, the single most important element in successful capital campaigning is volunteer leadership—men and women of power and influence who understand and are committed to the museum and

its project. Campaign leadership is often found where it has and will always be most needed—among the trustees and directors of the museum.

## Long-Range Planning

It is among the trustees and directors, the museum's administration and professional staff (the institutional "family") that a successful capital campaign begins. Such a campaign is grounded in sound planning; its appeal and call to donor action are based upon important needs—needs that make sense in terms of the long-range objectives of the institution. In the most classic instances, these needs have been delineated and solutions to them designed with costly expert assistance. Through the subsequent capital campaign—conducted to realize the solution—the needs are met by means of the only course of action available to the museum.

A museum's long-range plan is a written document stating goals, aspirations and needs over at least a five-to-10-year period. It outlines agreed-on priorities and details what must be accomplished, what should be accomplished, why, and what the approximate costs of major items will be.

The taproots of a successful capital campaign, then, are cooperative foresight and commonsense planning of the type provided by thoughtful, involved board members, articulate, business-minded administrators and competent, forward-looking museum professionals.

## The Case for Support

In the first article of this series on development (January/February 1982), James V. Toscano wrote convincingly

MICHAEL C. KIEFER is a campaign director with Ketchum, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His firm is a charter member of the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel.

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## Development

that "any development effort depends on a . . . document that describes the role of the museum and the quality of its plan and programs and that convincingly demonstrates the institution's needs." This document is widely known in capital campaigning as the case for support.

The case for support, itself a polished outgrowth of the long-range plan, is the basis for all public address in a major capital campaign. This one, definitive document establishes the worthiness of the museum and answers to the satisfaction of board members, administrators and, ultimately, constituents the central question of why anyone should support the institutional objectives upon which the campaign is built. The tenor and substance of this document must reflect favorably on the high purpose, taste, image and role of the museum.

The contents of the case for support generally include:

- an executive summary of the museum's purpose and vitality, its project and the capital campaign;
- the history of the institution, with particular emphasis normally placed upon outstanding patrons and leaders, their impact upon the institution and the record of service they and many others have made possible for present and future museum goers;
- the museum's institutional philosophy;
- the museum's unique dimensions and present vitality, with focus upon efficient and judicious stewardship and its resultant benefits to the public;
- a straightforward delineation of current needs placed in the context of the long-range plan;
- a clear statement of the project related to the long-range plan, with project components priced and listed in order of priority;
- a brief summary of the campaign's volunteer organization, goal, standards and duration; and

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teries surrounding what professional fund-raising counseling firms do, and how to go about evaluating and selecting the right firm.

Many institutions, of course, do conduct successful campaigns without the benefit of professional fund-raising counsel. Yours may be one of those that is capable of pulling it off. But is this a chance you are ready to take? Do you really know enough about professional firms to make such a decision with your eyes wide open?

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	True	False
1. Professional fund-raising counseling firms generally work for a percentage of the funds raised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. When you hire a professional firm, you are really only hiring an individual campaign director.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If you conduct your own feasibility study, the results will be just as valid as if you had used a professional firm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The ultimate responsibility for the success of your campaign should rest with the firm and its resident campaign manager.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The interpersonal skills of the campaign manager are equally as important as his or her technical skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Most of the actual work of the campaign is accomplished through volunteer committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The resident campaign manager should handle leadership gift solicitations personally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. You should expect a professional firm to provide a detailed line item budget of all expected campaign expenditures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The firm that makes the best sales presentation is invariably the one you should select.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Even if you answered every question correctly, you will benefit from our new publication, "The Role of Fund-Raising Counsel: How to Evaluate and Select a Professional Firm." The sixth volume in our widely acclaimed Goettler Series, the article describes the different types of fund-raising counseling firms; discusses the relative merits of "in-house" vs. "outside" campaign management; explains the services provided by professional firms; and suggests criteria for evaluating and selecting the right firm for your circumstances.

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ANSWERS: E-2; E-3; E-4; I-1; S-1; G-1; H-8; I-1

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## Development

- an appeal reiterating the point that realization of the museum's project will enable it to serve its constituency better.

The case for support becomes the source for all subsequent printed materials concerning the campaign, the basis for proposals addressed to prospective donors at all levels and the centerpiece of any precampaign planning/feasibility study or donor cultivation program. In addition, because the ideal volunteer campaigner is the best-informed campaigner, the case is used as the basis for volunteer education and training.

### The Criteria for Success

A project or program for which a capital campaign might be considered invariably represents a major step in the life of a museum. Because so much time, effort and institutional resources have gone into the planning, it is necessary for museum officials to proceed deliberately with their fund raising. However, development officers and seasoned fund-raisers in their midst will be aware that certain criteria for success in capital campaigning must be studied. The following eight elements are criteria against which a museum's hope for campaign success may be measured:

- an identifiable constituency with relevant ties to the museum and with adequate giving potential;
- a high degree of understanding of the museum's need and an acceptance of the proposed project among the constituency;
- a receptive constituency, whose members assign the museum's project a reasonably high priority in their overall philanthropic considerations;
- acceptance of and adherence to standards of giving based on fundraising principles (such standards, born of experience, generally indicate that success hinges upon the availability of 10 or so top-level gifts—individual, corporate, governmental or foundation—that account for 50 percent or more of the dollar goal);

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## Development

- an organization of informed, influential and effective leaders and a sufficient number of willing volunteers;
- adherence to a practical plan and timetable developed from a base of experience in similar fund-raising programs;
- a unified inner group that demonstrates a willingness to work, exert influence and give at levels commensurate with ability; and
- appropriate timing in light of other fund-raising activities and economic demands faced by the constituency.

### The Planning/Feasibility Study

Whether or not the museum's project will measure up to these criteria is determined by a precampaign planning/feasibility study. Often conducted by professional counsel, the study actually "tests the waters" through a series of confidential interviews with a sampling of those among the museum's

constituency who are in a position to provide volunteer leadership or who have major giving potential or whose knowledge of the museum and its constituency warrants close attention.

The completed study presents actual findings, conclusions and recommendations for action. It gives the museum an objective basis for proceeding with a campaign or not, adjusting objectives or timing, implementing additional precampaign activities and developing the general strategy for the campaign. Because the professional study director presents each interviewee with a summary of the case for support, the planning/feasibility study also serves as a significant early step in campaign public relations.

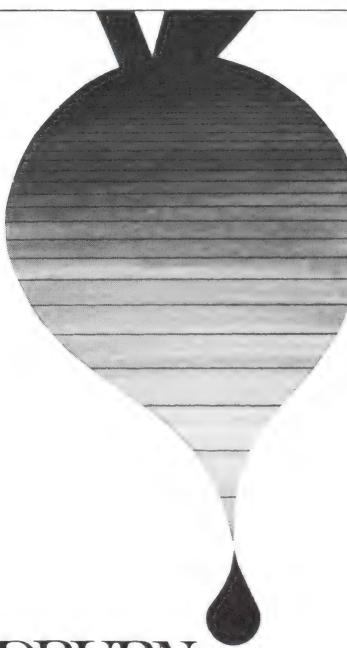
### Setting the Dollar Objective

A capital campaign that meets or exceeds its goal in a timely fashion profoundly elevates a museum's image and reputation. Everyone enjoys association with winning endeavors. If for no other reason than this, the financial objective of a capital campaign must

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## Development

not be determined randomly or in a vacuum without reference to realistic fund-raising potential.

The campaign goal should be based upon the cost of the museum's project and, more important, upon the support that can reasonably be expected. The goal may represent only one phase of a long-range project, but the success of the museum in realizing its total project can be built on achievement of interim objectives.

Factors involved in setting the objective include:

- the museum's previous fund-raising history;
- the results of the planning/feasibility study with respect to the availability of top-level gifts and leadership;
- the capital campaign experience of other museums of similar size and purpose;
- the campaign experience of other nonprofit institutions and organizations in the local area; and
- the giving record and pattern of the museum's present and potential constituencies.

A credible, achievable dollar objective is one in which the museum family and its constituency have *confidence*. Confidence in the campaign objective motivates volunteers and prospective donors to rise to the campaign challenge. Expenditures of volunteer time and energy and philanthropic investments commensurate with individual and corporate giving ability are hard won today; they are most readily assured to those institutions that can create a campaign climate in which volunteers and donors alike sense that they are participating in the fulfillment of an important project that is not only worthy but promises all involved a taste of victory.

### Leadership

Without a doubt, volunteer leadership is the single most important element in successful fund raising. This is nowhere more apparent than in the conduct of a capital campaign. Many a

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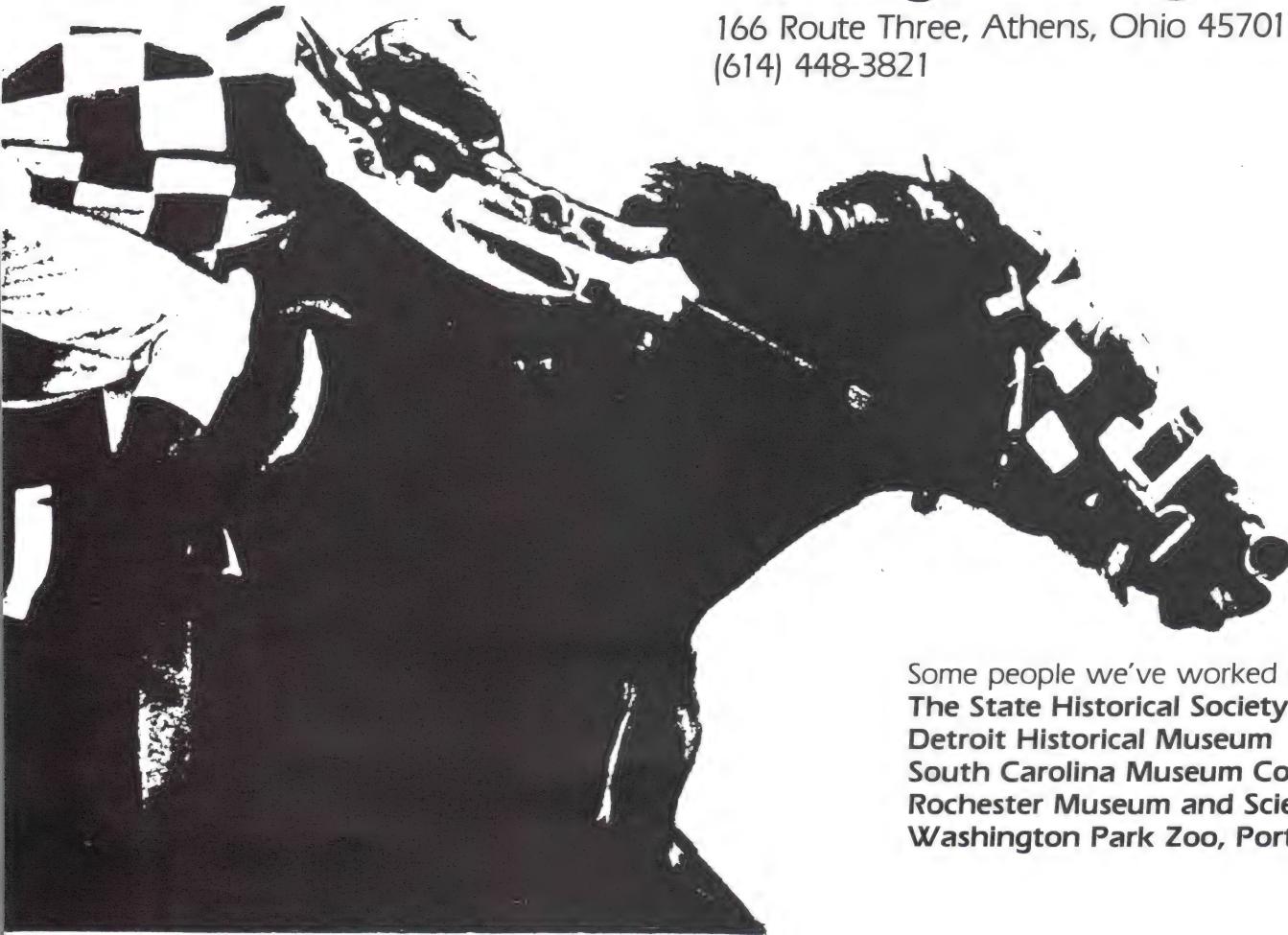
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# Development

weak appeal succeeds because powerful men and women want it to succeed and accept responsibility for doing all that success requires. And many a worthwhile appeal has failed because of indifferent leaders or nonleaders who could not involve themselves or others meaningfully.

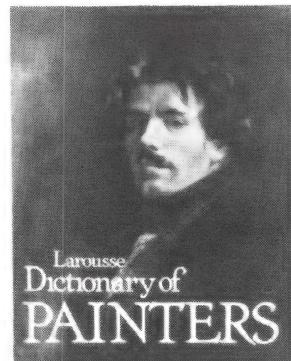
Campaign leaders should have *power* and *influence*, a knowledge of how and when to use them and a willingness to use them for the betterment of the museum and those it serves. They should have a communicable *commitment* to the museum, its role in society and the project for which funds are being sought. The *respect* of the museum's constituency provides leaders with further ability to inform, inspire and involve volunteers and prospective donors. Finally, the leaders should have a degree of *affluence*, personal

and corporate, and they should be prepared to set the pace of the campaign with pledges commensurate with giving ability.

## Campaign Organization

A campaign plan prepared by the person coordinating the capital campaign is a blueprint for success. It is designed to guide the volunteer organization through a sequence of activities, all of which build toward success. The plan spells out organizational requirements, timetables, volunteer job descriptions, volunteer enlistment procedures, prospect review mechanics, a public relations plan, record-keeping and office procedures and campaign policies. It should focus attention on the following elements, which are essential to the successful conduct of a capital campaign:

- *commitment*, both of time and resources, from a nucleus of top campaign leaders and the museum family—those closest to the project and most responsible for its design and success;



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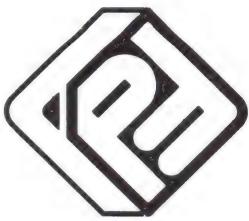
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# Development

- *communication* or the free flow of pertinent information to and through the volunteer organization, the constituency, the administration and the museum staff;
- *coordination* with the departments of the museum, especially the development department, whose officers and staff play a vital role in planning and implementing the effort; and
- *cooperation* among the staff and administration, campaign headquarters and the development staff, the curatorial staff and the publications office, and those members of the family, often curators, who have regular dealings with important segments of the constituency.

Because a capital campaign is always an important chapter in the life of an

organization, someone should devote full time and total energy to it. That person should know what to do, when to do it and should be in a position to make the hundreds of decisions necessary to sustain momentum in a climate conducive to success. These are vital decisions concerning strategy, sources of funds, timing, operation of a campaign headquarters, development of appropriate campaign literature, enlistment and organization of volunteers, planning and conduct of meetings, accurate record-keeping systems, control of campaign expenses and mechanics of a pledge collection system.

The role of the capital campaign director is to provide full-time direction of a capital campaign and to maximize the potential of the museum by developing a plan for success and executing that plan from a base of personal and corporate knowledge and experience. The campaign director builds upon the foundations laid by the development staff. These include accurate giving records, healthy donor relations, a knowledge of the constituency and a studied appreciation for and under-

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## Development

standing of the museum's history, present circumstances and future goals.

When the capital campaign director is a fund-raising professional not on the museum staff, he or she has a serious responsibility to work closely with the museum's development staff because, with the board and administration, the staff has the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the museum. Professional counsel must listen to and consult with the development staff, keeping them informed of the details of the campaign. The staff is tuned into the web of human intricacies in the community, and fund raising, after all, is nothing more or less than *people* giving to *people* for the good of the community and its museum.

The campaign director normally reports directly to the museum's board of trustees or a specific board committee.

But the museum's development officer and the capital campaign director are a team, each with very different responsibilities, both of which fall under development. The development officer must maintain and oversee continuity in the functions of the institution. The project-oriented campaign director must realize the goals of the immediate project in a manner that is consistent with the past, present and future "style" of the museum.

In considering a capital campaign, museum trustees, directors, administrators and professional staff, finally, must decide for themselves that it is up to them to design and realize the future of their institution, committing themselves to the use of judicious foresight and a determined channeling of available energies and resources. Setting out to write such a vital chapter in the life of an institution is nothing less than entering upon a teeming philanthropic marketplace in which preparedness, organization, leadership and vision must be judged eminently worthy of support. △

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## Museum Studies

continued from page 71

through courses of study and internships that rigorously teach the history, theory and practice of museum science and knowledge of related disciplines having to do with the study of material culture, art, history and the sciences. Examining case studies and participating in a professional museum context can assist students in the practical application of theoretical precepts. If possible, distinguished collections, professionally managed and interpreted, should be made available for guided learning experiences. The curriculum should also include provision for testing students' mastery of subject matter and evaluating their career potential. Apart from formal courses the curriculum should afford opportunities for independent study and growth and foster the adoption of ethical standards and accountability. It may also seek out experimental equipment and processes in order to devise and test new technologies and methodologies.

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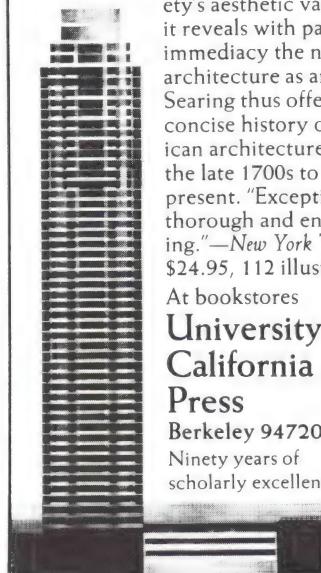
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## Museum Studies

- Written agreements between the program and host internship museums and interns.
- List of special programs (guest lecturers, seminars, etc.)
- List of courses with number of students enrolled in each.

### Faculty

#### RATIONALE

A successful museum studies program will have a faculty experienced in professional museum practices and representative of the academic disciplines appropriate to its scope. The size and experience of the faculty should be in keeping with the goals and objectives of the program. Research is vital, as it enriches teaching and contributes to the bodies of museological and disciplinary knowledge.

#### CRITERIA

A corps of full-time faculty academically qualified for appointment to the graduate faculty of the university should be responsible for the major portion of the teaching and research components of the program. Part-time faculty and guest appointments are desirable to complement the specialties of the full-time faculty and provide additional direct contact with museums and allied professions.

Collectively the faculty should have background appropriate to the objectives of the program; substantial museum experience; advanced degrees or other appropriate credentials from a variety of academic institutions; mastery of subjects included in the program's curriculum; a substantial record of scholarship; an aptitude for educational planning, administration and evaluation; and a close and continuing participation in the museum profession. Each individual faculty member should demonstrate interest, ability and effectiveness in teaching; aptitude for research; competency in assigned areas of specialization; active participation in museum and scholarly organizations; concern for the introduction of students into the museum profession; and a commitment to museology.

The distribution of faculty work loads should help ensure that quality instruction is maintained throughout the calendar year. Assignments should be related to individual interests and competencies and permit time for research, professional activities and counseling students.

The university should demonstrate its support of good teaching, a lively research program and active professional participation through faculty appointments and promotions and by providing appropriate facilities and funding. As much as appropriate, it should encourage innovation in methodology and technology.

#### EVIDENCE

- Faculty curriculum vitae.
- Faculty profile.
- Outline of faculty work loads, including courses taught with student enrollments and description of student counseling, research and administrative responsibilities.
- List of consultancies, guest lectureships and professional activities for each faculty member.
- Course syllabuses, bibliographies and other instructional material.
- Examples of faculty publications such as monographs, articles and reports in professional journals, reports of consultations and statements on work in progress.
- University policy on adjunct and part-time faculty.
- University policy on visiting faculty.

### Students

#### RATIONALE

A museum studies program should strive to attract students of the highest quality and commitment to the field and should execute its responsibility to those students in admissions and academic and counseling policies, procedures and activities. The character and worth of a graduate program is directly related to the quality of its students.

#### CRITERIA

The initial responsibility of a program is to make itself known. Accurate descriptions of its goals and objectives, admission requirements, curriculum and faculty should be made available to the public, prospective students and museum professionals.

The program should develop recruitment, admissions and financial aid

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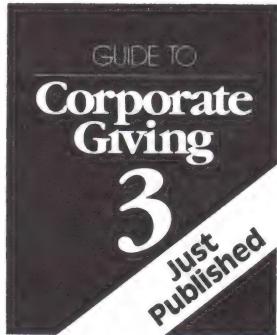
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# Museum Studies

policies that will promote its objectives. These should meet or exceed the minimum standards for graduate programs at the university and should reflect the profession's needs. The admissions policy must be in compliance with university regulations and other legal regulations, such as affirmative action.

Potential students should have a commitment to the museum profession. Admission should normally be limited to those who hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in a discipline relevant to the goals and objectives of the program, but exceptions can be made when justified. Admission to special programs or courses should not imply automatic admission to degree programs unless the admissions standards are identical.

Criteria and methods used in evaluating applications should be made known to anyone who desires the information. Assessment should be based on an evaluation of academic, intellectual and personal qualifications, with consideration of the career objectives of the individual and the objectives of the program.

Students should be provided with regular assessments of their performance and progress and given opportunities for guidance and counseling. They should be introduced to the activities and members of the museum profession, and an atmosphere of collegiality among them should be promoted.

EVIDENCE

- Admissions and financial aid policies; recruitment materials.
  - Files of students rejected and admitted, including letters of recommendation, transcripts and other relevant documents.
  - Charters of student organizations.
  - Grades and materials used in assessing students.
  - Student guide that clearly explains application procedures, admissions policy counseling services, student-faculty ratios, fee schedules, degree requirements, course schedule, emphasis options, internships and grievance procedures.
  - Examples of student work, including research papers and project reports.
  - History of students' achievements.
  - History of alumni careers

## Governance, Administration and Financial Support

### Governance

#### RATIONALE

A museum studies program should be governed, administered and financially supported in a manner that ensures its quality and the achievement of its goals and objectives. The quality of a program is affected by its status within the university.

#### CRITERIA

A museum studies program should be a distinct academic unit within the university. It should have the same independence from the university and from professional associations or advisory bodies as other academic units. Thus, within the general guidelines of the university and profession, the program should control its content, the selection and promotion of its faculty and the selection of students.

The program's director should have the same title, status and authority as heads of comparable units in the university; the

salary should be in keeping with the position. The program, faculty and students should have the same representation as comparable units on the university's policy-making or advisory committees or councils.

#### EVIDENCE

- Organizational chart of the university showing the relationship of the museum studies program and its director to the university administration.
- List of program advisors.
- Policies and procedures governing faculty selection, promotion and tenure.
- List of faculty and student participation in university committees.
- Minutes of faculty meetings.
- Statement by the university of the purpose of the program in the university.

### Administration

#### RATIONALE

Effective leadership on the part of the program's director will provide an environ-

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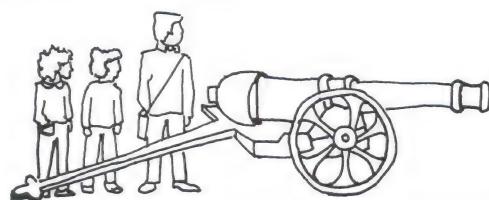
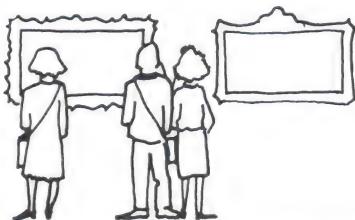
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# Museum Studies

ment in which the research, teaching and learning activities of faculty and students are encouraged. The program's director, with the cooperation of the faculty, must maintain the quality of the program and an appropriate balance between its academic subjects and practical applications.

## CRITERIA

The director of a museum studies program should be a strong leader with substantial experience as a museum professional and academic qualifications comparable to directors of other academic units. The director should continue to participate in professional museum activities and organizations.

The leadership of the director should be characterized by appropriate administrative skills and an understanding of the museum profession and the academic environment. The director should be responsible for maintaining the liaison between the academic program and the

museum profession as well as managing the affairs of the program. The decision-making structure should permit the active participation of the faculty, staff and students as appropriate.

A formal relationship between the program and a university museum or a local museum or museums should be developed to ensure communication regarding program development and practical experiences for the students.

The noninstructional staff should be competent and adequate in number to support the program.

## EVIDENCE

- Organizational chart of the department.
- List of departmental committee members.
- Standing rules and/or written policies of the department.
- Statement of the director's qualifications.
- Annual reports, long-range planning reports and self-study reports submitted by the director to the university administration.

List of professional activities of the program director and faculty.

List and qualifications of the museum personnel who serve as adjunct teaching staff and project supervisors; correspondence relating to the cooperation between the program and university or area museums.

Evaluations of the department and/or the director.

## Financial Support

### RATIONALE

The quality of a program is directly related to the level of financial support received from the university. Since a museum studies program is a graduate and professional program, the costs are higher than for undergraduate programs. By its financial contribution to the program, the university should clearly demonstrate its support.

### CRITERIA

Financial support should be sufficient to establish and maintain a program in accordance with the general criteria outlined

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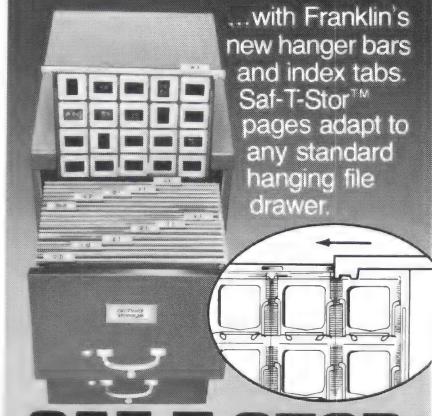
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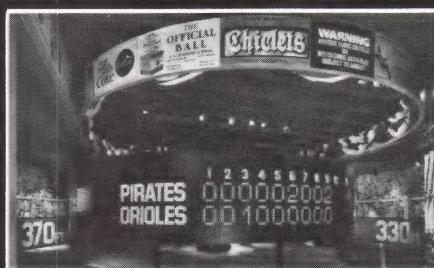
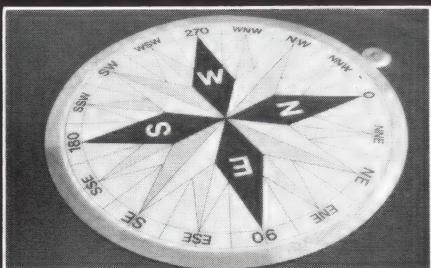
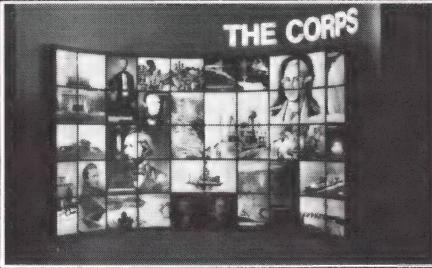
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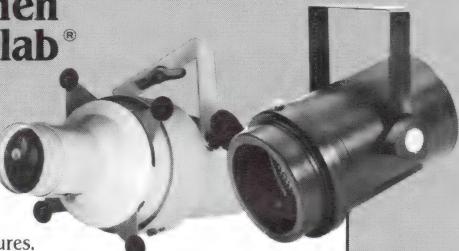
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## Museum Studies

in this statement. Faculty salaries and salary increases should be similar to those of comparable units. Funds for faculty development are especially important in a museum studies program and should be available, on a basis comparable with other units, for research projects, travel and participation in professional organizations and leaves with pay.

Assistantships and financial aid for students should be available on a basis comparable with that of other graduate programs. Financial aid for student internships in museums should also be available to the degree possible within the university structure.

The university should be encouraged to develop fund-raising programs that would help support various aspects of the museum studies program.

### EVIDENCE

- Annual budgets and financial reports of the program's income and expenditures.
- Financial reports of the university.
- Statement of faculty salaries throughout the university.
- List of financial aid programs available to students.
- List of internship scholarships and recipients.
- List of students receiving financial aid throughout the university, including the department and amount.
- Reports of faculty development programs throughout the university, including budget and recipients with department and amount.

### Physical Resources and Facilities

#### RATIONALE

A museum studies program needs physical resources and facilities at the university and cooperation from university and/or local museums. The university must provide library resources, services and facilities adequate for the faculty to accomplish the program's objectives. Critical to the success of a museum studies program is a well-established working relationship with one or more professionally



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managed museums in or close to the university. The specific nature of the relationship will depend on the goals and objectives of the program.

#### CRITERIA

University faculty and administrative offices, conference and seminar rooms, laboratory space and special facilities defined by the faculty should be adequate in number, size and arrangement to carry out the functions of the program. The university should have or have access to standard museum reference books and journals, multimedia resources, computer services, media production laboratories or agencies and facilities for research and independent study using up-to-date technology and equipment.

In order that students may have practical experiences to complement the theoretical ones associated with the classroom, a program must have a working relationship with an accredited or accreditable university museum, local museum and/or other museums. This relationship may be formal and include contracts or agreements or informal with only a general understanding between the program faculty and museum staff. The cooperating museums should be adequate in scope, size, program content, services, staff and collections to offer students the experience of a museum environment and working situation and proper supervision to support the program's objectives.

#### EVIDENCE

- Library of museological literature or access to one.
- Floor plan of museum studies space and facilities.
- List of special equipment and furnishings.
- Description of additional resources.
- Copies of formal contracts or agreements between the program and affiliated museums.
- History of cooperating museums and the nature of the cooperation.
- Description and geographical location of cooperating museums.

#### Placement

#### RATIONALE

A primary purpose of a museum studies program is to provide qualified individuals as candidates for positions in



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## Museum Studies

museums; thus a program should accept placement as one of its responsibilities. The placement record of graduates is an important indication of the quality of the program's curriculum, faculty, facilities and admissions policy.

### CRITERIA

A museum studies program should have specific placement objectives that reflect career aspirations. Professional career counseling that recognizes current professional requirements should be available for students, interns and recent graduates. A position referral and reference service is equally important, and faculty and alumni should be encouraged to develop leads to available positions. Periodic appraisals of placement should be undertaken through alumni surveys, and graduates should be encouraged to suggest improvements.

Reasonable measures of success in placement include prompt employment of recent graduates in professional positions in the museum field or related fields, acceptance of graduates in other graduate programs and placement of interns in supervised, professional-level learning experiences in accredited museums. A further indication of program effectiveness is the number of alumni in positions of high responsibility.

### EVIDENCE

- Alumni directories.
- Résumés of graduating students and interns.
- Program bulletins announcing positions open.
- Placement statistics.
- Description of career counseling activities.
- Employers' reports.

▲

### NOTES

1. American Association of Museums, Museum Studies Committee, "Museum Studies," *Museum News* 57, no. 2 (November/December 1978): 21.
2. American Association of Museums, Museum Studies Curriculum Committee, *Museum Studies: A Curriculum Guide for Universities and Museums* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1973).

3. AAM Museum Studies Committee, "Museums Studies," pp. 23–24.

4. International Council of Museums, "Resolutions," *Museum Training at University Level*, a symposium organized by the ICOM International Committee for the Training of Personnel, Brussels, 1978 (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1980), p. 58.

5. AAM Museum Studies Committee, "Museums Studies," pp. 23–24; American Association of Museums, Committee on Ethics, *Museum Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: AAM, 1978); H.J. Swinney, ed., *Professional Standards for Museum Accreditation* (Washington, D.C.: AAM, 1978).

6. A.M. Heath, "The Training of Education Officers," p. 19; J.C. Hodge, "Existing Education Officer Training Programmes," p. 20; M. Brenner, "Training for Museum Education at the George Washington University," p. 20; H.S. Parker, III, "The Training of Museum Educators," p. 21; H.R. Singleton, "University of Leicester, Department of Museum Studies Syllabus (General)," pp. 41–44; G.E. Burcaw, "Museum Training at the University of Idaho," pp. 45–48; *Museum Training at University Level*; AAM Museum Studies Curriculum Committee, *Museum Studies*; Ontario Museum Association, "The Certificate in Basic Museum Studies," information brochure.

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## EXHIBITION DESIGN

## Sherman Lee

continued from page 81

*Do you enjoy administration?*

I don't enjoy a lot of administration, nor does it drive me crazy. I can take it or leave it. But if you believe, as I do, that the director of an art museum should be the artistic director and work primarily in the discipline of art, it follows that because of the administrative responsibilities you're going to have to cut down in some other areas. You may regret the sacrifices, but there are rewards. One is that, as director, you have a sense of accomplishment in establishing the artistic direction and the content of a major art museum. You know also, though, that if you don't do these things, somebody else will. Nevertheless, as director you have a certain amount of power, and wielding power in an effective and creative way is an attraction of the job.

*When you started your career, did you hope to get into management?*

No, I did not set out to become a museum administrator, nor would I ever. You didn't choose in 1940, especially if you were married and your wife was going to have a baby. You applied for jobs madly and tried to get one. I almost went to a university as a professor. I might still be in universities if I had done that, but instead I went to a museum—the Detroit Institute of Arts. I'd always liked the idea of working in a museum. One of the reasons I studied here in Cleveland was because of this museum. Eventually, a position opened up here, and I became a curator.

*Were you a student in art history or in studio work?*

In the history of art. I had taken some studio work, but I majored and took my master's in history and my doctorate in art history.

*As an administrator, is it an advantage to be an authority in the field?*

I think it's important for the overall direction of a general art museum that the person in charge have a certain catholicity of interest and taste. I

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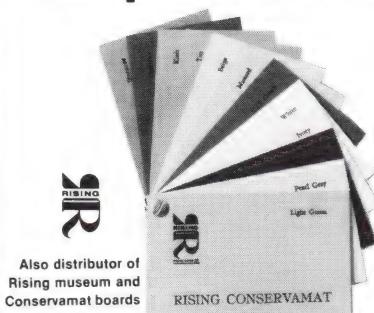
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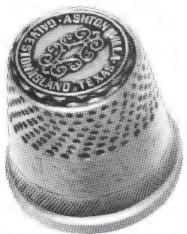
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## Sherman Lee

I think the professional art people like to feel that the decisions are being made by one of their own kind and with a thought to art as the dominant thing, and they'll more easily take a lot of adverse decisions that may have to be made from someone like me.

*Art museums in the United States today seem to want to do a lot more than just display pretty objects in nice galleries. They hold classes and lectures. They show fine films and give concerts. They lead trips. There seems to be a big effort to go beyond the pictorial arts, too. Is your museum part of this new effort to expand the boundaries of art for the visitor?*

Well, the interesting thing about what goes on here, which is a great deal, is that it's been going on for a long time; it isn't something new. It's not in response to a sudden wave of guilt feelings or anything like that. The museum has one of the oldest education departments in the country. It also has one of the oldest music programs in the country.

The museum opened to the public in 1916. The first director, Frederic Allen Whiting, was a social worker very interested in the classics and children's education. This interest was solidified by the appointment of Thomas Munro as curator of education in 1930. He was a pupil of John Dewey and a well-known writer in esthetics. One of the sources of income for the museum from the very beginning has been the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Trust, which had as its original purpose to support the museum and to provide classes for working people. We now have 24 full-time people in the education department, all of them professionals. In the history of this museum, we've never asked volunteers to do the teaching.

We give courses in art history and art appreciation for children and for adults. We have a joint program with Case Western Reserve University that involves teaching both undergraduates and graduates. We have teachers' train-

ing workshops. As a matter of policy, we have avoided straight studio courses because we do not wish to be in competition with our friend across the street the Cleveland Institute of Art, which has studio classes for potential professionals as well as for lay people. We do use studio elements in some of our own classes, though. Everything our programs do has to be oriented toward the understanding and the enjoyment of the permanent collections or of our special exhibitions.

The music program goes back many, many years to the McMyler Fund, which gave us a baroque organ and some money for offering concerts on it. The program has now grown because two other endowments have come in for musical purposes, and they permit us to have a substantial number of free concerts of all kinds and a subscription series that includes important chamber music ensembles and choruses and singers. There's a lot of music that goes on here, all paid for by its own endowment, and we have a curator and an assistant curator of music and a secretary for the department.

We also put together audiovisual programs, prepare catalogs and introductions to the gallery areas and publish books, to say nothing of all the public lectures we hold and the 170 slide tapes we have on command.

*As part of the educational function of a museum, do you try to focus on more than just the works of art that are here and on somehow arousing in visitors an ability to appreciate esthetic quality in life around them?*

That's part of the program. We hope of course that visitors won't just talk

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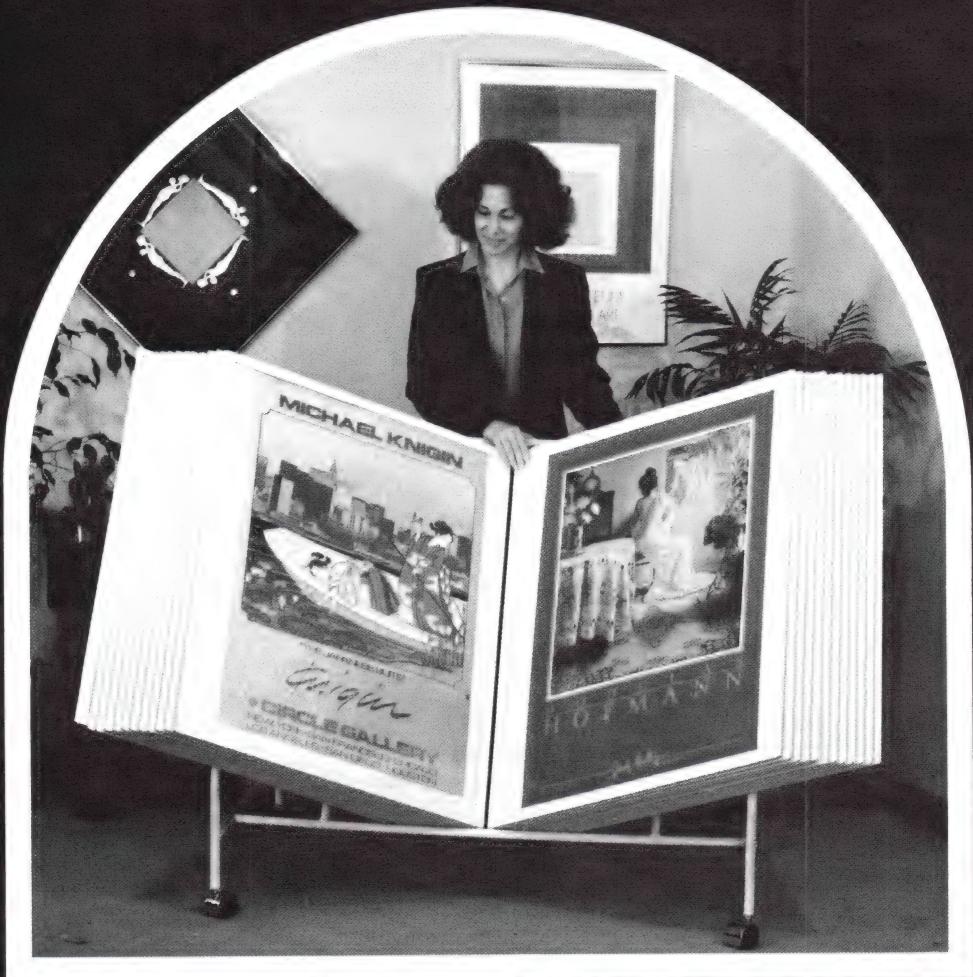
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# Sherman Lee

about the things that are in the galleries, that they'll gain some understanding of the history of art and esthetics and techniques. There's a broad mix of things in what we offer. Also, there are outreach programs involving school systems and community centers. Our extension exhibitions department prepares exhibits for lending, sometimes just case-sized, other times full-scale.

*Despite the benefits of this broad mix in museums today, we know you've said that such diversity has drawbacks, that too many museums are trying to be too many things at once. In one of your essays, you've written that to get funding, museums acquire all sorts of tools, all sorts of roles, all sorts of functions. "Such an undifferentiated organization runs the risk of becoming merely diffuse. . . . What we need is sharper differentiation, a more certain and precise perimeter within which we can effectively operate. . . . A large part of that search is for identification."<sup>2</sup> We're wondering what kind of perimeter you and your staff have chosen for the Cleveland Museum.*

One very definite perimeter that helps to focus things here is to take the word *art* seriously, as I said in the beginning, to acquire works of the very best quality.

Second, you can't, I think, show all the art done everywhere. You can try

## Correction

There were some mistakes in "The Uses of Adversity," February 1983 MUSEUM NEWS. The Illinois State Museum receives a total of \$3 million from the state; the current operating budget of the Chicago Historical Society is \$2.4 million; the Illinois Arts Action Coalition should have read the Illinois Arts Council; and Joy Gordon is the director of the Danforth Museum in Framingham, Massachusetts. We regret these errors.

to do the best that's been done everywhere. That requires a value judgment, but it's one you've got to make. If you do contemporary arts too heavily, you put yourself into a real swamp because there is just so much going on that there's no way you can cover it all unless you become a kind of telephone directory. Unless they're specifically designated as museums of contemporary art, I think that general art museums like the Cleveland Museum should perhaps do less than they do with contemporary art.

And then there are all the people who are interested in the galleries and the community centers and so on. But it's a pretty big place out there, and a museum has to pick and choose. The museum should be concerned primarily with art, not with being a social

agency or a means of social uplift or a source of assistance to the underprivileged, however compassionate and noble those goals may be. I think that in modern culture in general and in American culture in particular the arts are an endangered species and that therefore it's very important for the museum to retain its function of insisting on the integrity of the arts, on conserving works of art and on preserving the standards under which good work can continue. △

## NOTES

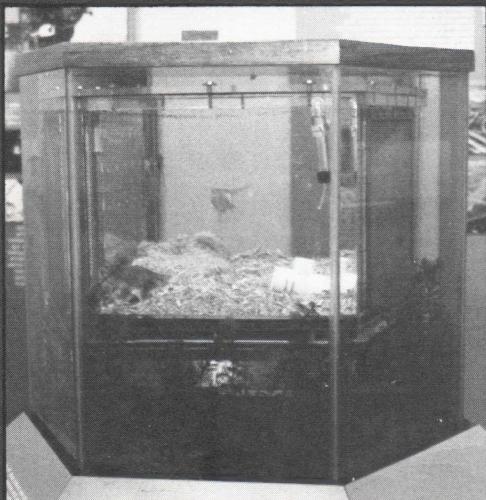
1. Sherman E. Lee, "The Museum in Today's Society," *Art News*, April 1969, pp. 27-68.
2. Lee, "Art Museums and Education," in *The Art Museum as Educator*, ed. Barbara Y. Newsom and Adele Z. Silver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 12.

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